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Sense of Place:
An Interpretive Study of Selected Residents of Strathcona County, Alberta

by

Chelsea Elizabeth MacLeod ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Recreation and Leisure Studies

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Abstract

Sense of place is the term most commonly used to describe the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a locality (Williams & Stuart, 1998). As a conceptual framework, sense of place offers a holistic and contextual avenue to gain access to deeper understandings of people–place relationships. Places are concrete physical locations that become centres of felt value as people interact and become acquainted with the landscape. This study focuses on the sense of place of residents of Strathcona County, Alberta. The research asks the question: How do selected residents of Strathcona County articulate their views on sense of place is general and in relation to Strathcona County in particular? Twelve in-depth interviews were employed to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of sense of place of selected individuals from Strathcona County. The study was based on the exploratory nature of the interpretive hermeneutical framework. The interview began with broad place-related questions and then the discussion focused on Strathcona County and natural places specifically.

Sense of place for the selected respondents of Strathcona County denoted a sense of comfort and well being in place, whether that in intimate or faraway places. However, the interpretive process required delving deeper into the phenomenon in order to uncover some of the reasons that comprise comfort and well being in place. To analyse the data an oppositional framework was used to "set up" and expose some of the gaps that exist in this kind of organisational framework. In many cases, respondents talked about something in relation to what it was not. Therefore, the binary allowed me to categorize

responses, and then work, in my interpretation to expose the middle ground, with the goal of placing these ideas on a continuum.

The chapters are organized into themes that reflect a binary opposition structure. Chapter Four deals with the relationship between public and private spaces. This discussion includes an interpretive analysis of the interview data focusing on individual spaces and social spaces, specifically community places. Sense of place is both personal and shared; it is both private and public. However, these are not two separate entities. They are often blurred, as people are continually moving between people and places, both alone and with other people. Chapter five focuses on the opposition of urban and rural space. This discussion included issues of danger and safety in places, inclusive and exclusive places, and places characterized by sameness and difference.

Chapter six examines urban and rural spaces, looking specifically are rootedness and newness, nostalgia, modernity, and adult and child relationships with place. It is commonly thought that sense of place is based on length of residency in a place. In many cases, the data reflects this; however, there are exceptions to this rule that are difficult to theorize as of yet, for instance the experience of youth cultures in place. This chapter demonstrates the complexity of length of residency and how it impacts sense of place.

Chapter seven addresses local and non-local leisure and how these effect sense of place. Leisure and travel represent two important ways in which place influences the imagination and lived experience. This chapter was particularly interesting because it emphasised the important role that leisure experiences have on place experiences. Leisure, whether in the home place or away, has a considerable impact on the lived experience. In fact, the very process of moving through space impacts sense of place.

Places constitute concrete focal points where natural forces, social relations, and human meanings overlap (Williams & Patterson, 1994). These meanings can be integrated into theory and practice to inform recreation and leisure studies, as well as a variety of fields such as community development, urban planning, cultural geography and others.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled SENSE OF PLACE: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF SELECTED RESIDENTS OF STRATHCONA COUNTY, ALBERTA submitted by Chelsea Elizabeth MacLeod in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Recreation and Leisure Studies.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Kirby Short and Sarah. Among many other things, I thank you for making this dream of mine, yours.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. An Introduction to the Research

Edward Relph (1976) writes that we live, act, and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time, we seem to have a meagre understanding of the constitution of these places and the ways in which we experience them. Places are concrete physical locations that become centres of felt value as people interact and become acquainted with the landscape. In this way, undifferentiated space becomes place when we endow it with value (Tuan, 1977). Embedded with meaning and symbolism, places reflect the people that live, work, and recreate, in a particular geographic location. Likewise, natural features and the unique qualities of place influence people and become intertwined in shared social and cultural ways of knowing and understanding the lived world.

Sense of place is the term most commonly used to describe the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a locality (Williams & Stuart, 1998). As a conceptual framework, sense of place offers a holistic and contextual avenue to gain access to deeper understandings of people–place relationships. Places constitute concrete focal points where natural forces, social relations, and human meanings overlap (Williams & Patterson, 1994). These meanings can be integrated into theory and practice to inform recreation and leisure studies, as well as a variety of fields such as community development, urban planning, cultural geography and others.

Increasing participation in a wide variety of outdoor recreation, sporting, tourism, and industry related activities has resulted in stress being placed on the environment (Swinnerton, 1999). It is therefore helpful to gain an understanding of place experiences that lead people to form strong feelings and, therefore, personal attachments to places, whether they are leisure places, home places, or places far away. At the outset, this process involves engaging in a dialogue to capture the intangible values that people have associated with landscape and place.

There is a need to address a broader range of meanings and values associated with landscape and place so that conceptual and operational frameworks may be developed, which foster inclusive opportunities for diverse groups. Ewert (1996a) states that answers to questions involving environmental effects of human populations should be fully addressed by investigating the roles human-centred constructs such as perception, motivation, and socio-economic factors have on natural areas. At the interface of physical and social environments is a diversity of landscape experiences. If we want to understand people and place relationships, then we need to understand how people experience these environments (Schroeder, 1996b).

Recent developments in planning and management suggest an increased recognition of the importance of developing more holistic land management frameworks that influence leisure and recreation experiences of place (Ewert, 1996b; Williams & Patterson, 1994; Schroeder, 1996a, 1996b). Williams and Patterson (1994) identify the new developments in resource management as a response to a paradigm shift that addresses the following: "(a) developing an understanding of the social meaning of the landscape, which, at best, has been only partially legitimized in the old paradigm of natural resource management, (b) the spatial view inherent in land use and ecosystem management has rarely been reflected in human dimensions research, (c) only by striving to "map" the meanings of the landscape can social science make an integral contribution to the new paradigm, and (d) the concept of place is the means by which social science can incorporate the human system into the new paradigm" (p. 2).

The shift addresses a broader range of meanings and values associated with landscape and place. Landscape and place need to be viewed as a larger unit of analysis, rather than at an individual attribute level (Williams & Patterson, 1996). Viewing the landscape holistically enables environmental monitoring over time at a grand scale, but also embraces the landscape as a meaning-filled spatial context. Furthermore, a growing importance is being placed on understanding the behaviours, attitudes, and needs of people in relation to natural resources. The benefit and value of land encompasses more than tangible products available for human consumption (Williams & Patterson). Inherent to this approach is the need to understand the social meanings associated with landscape and place. Transcending the tangible properties of landscape and place associated with commodity production and ecological processes offers the opportunity to explore the intangible, but fundamental properties of people-place relationships including spiritual benefits, emotional connections, and deep values (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992).

Natural resource planning and management is a composite process consisting of myriad relationships among people, place, and the environment. The development of inclusive land use initiatives requires an understanding of the intangible nature of people-place relationships. Articulating sense of place is one way to obtain information about the relationships between people and place. It is a concept that offers managers a way to anticipate, identify, and respond to the bonds people form with places (Williams & Stewart, 1998). To this end, leisure and recreation scholars and practitioners can facilitate a process whereby integration of people and place relationships informs the decision making and planning of leisure and home places.

B. Research Objective

This study focuses on the sense of place of residents of Strathcona County, Alberta. The research asks the question: How do selected residents of Strathcona County articulate their views on sense of place is general and in relation to Strathcona County in particular? In-depth interviews are employed to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of sense of place by selected individuals from Strathcona County.

Following this introduction, the author's personal journey in relation to this topic is presented. A standard practice of qualitative research, the personal journey is intended to give the reader an idea of the author's perspective in relation to the topic of study. Following the personal journey is a literature review detailing the rationale for the research. Sense of place is framed using examples of paradigm shifts in the field and scholarship that acknowledge the importance of including human meanings and values associated with landscape and place. The literature review focuses on various place and landscape studies providing a comprehensive conceptual and theoretical framework for the research. The study participants, the methodological approach, the method of data collection, and analysis are presented to outline the study design. Included in the methodology section is an overview of the process of data analysis.

The thesis is then organized into chapters that reflect the emergent themes.

The chapters are as follows: Chapter one – Introduction; Chapter two – Literature Review; Chapter Three – Methodology and Methods; Chapter Four – Private and Public Space; Chapter Five – Urban and Rural Space; Chapter Six – Long- and Short-term Residency in Place; Chapter Seven – Leisure and Travel; and finally, a conclusion is presented in Chapter Eight.

This thesis does not provide a definitive answer to the question "what is your sense of place?"; rather, it represents the beginning of a complex discussion. The interview data reflect rich and complex associations to place that provide a wealth of information. It is apparent that important feelings associated with place have a wide-ranging influence, not just on leisure and recreation. Further study in this area could inform community development, travel and tourism, urban planning, architecture and design, and other domains of this nature.

This thesis reflects an attempt to address the question of sense of place as effectively and efficiently as possible, while achieving a substantial amount of breadth and depth on the topic. I hope that the thesis is enlightening and illuminating and that it calls upon the reader to think of special places, whether they are home places or places far away. Sense of place is an illusive concept, but it is one that can act as a window into how people and place intersect.

My understanding of the project has evolved over time and is a result of my personal and academic experience.The literature review and perspective for analysing the data is the culmination of two years of reading and inquiring into the concept of sense of place. Undoubtedly, the "place" that I was at when I started this project has changed.

C. Personal Journey

This thesis is an attempt to understand the concept of sense of place. While my primary interest in this concept relates to the study of recreation and leisure it also includes other fields of study, such as geography, tourism, cultural studies, and sociology. I perceive this inquiry as first and foremost a personal exploration into the meaning of sense of place, secondly, as representative of a point in time in my academic journey, and thirdly, as a thesis fulfilling partial requirements for a masters degree program in recreation and leisure studies.

My interpretive inquiry into this phenomenon begins with a general interest in how places are constructed as areas of felt value and meaning. I am intrigued with how we claim places as our own and how we understand places as part of our identity or who we are. I am also interested in movement through space and place. The crossing of borders both visible and invisible is necessary to understand both the "limiting" and "freeing" realities of place experiences.

Initially, I approached this topic as a student of tourism. In the context of tourism, and even more broadly recreation and leisure studies, places serve as geographic locations for important and memorable leisure activities and vacation destinations. Therefore, exploration into the nature of place is necessary to understand why people travel and how and why places are created and marketed as destinations or attractions, as opposed to just "spaces." Furthermore, tourist destinations, as locations, cannot be conceptualised in purely geographical terms. Tourism is characterized by social and cultural contexts as well, in relations between the tourist and host community and the nature of tourism development.

This inquiry is grounded in a qualitative research methodology approach. The following is my personal rationale for choosing the qualitative methodological approach. Firstly, my background, prior to being a University student, was in dance. Dance, as an art form, is a fluid and malleable form of communication. It has a definite form and structure, but it is also an expression of creativity and emotion. At a basic level, I feel comfortable with the idea of creativity and openness in academia. I feel there is a place for emotions and feelings in rigorous study and that there is a need to communicate these findings to a greater public audience. As a concept, sense of place means movement to me. As a trained dancer and choreographer, dance was my way of connecting with time and space simultaneously, while offering a vehicle to communicate and express ideas, feelings, and emotions. The concept of sense of place reminds me of the feelings I had when dancing. There is elusiveness inherent to the concept that begs questions and queries. It is fluid and intangible, meaningful to people, and yet very hard to put into words. It is a concept that sparks interest and discussion – one that is undoubtedly ever-changing and evolving. It is infinitely rich in detail and emotion and is silently communicated and acted out on a daily basis, whether consciously realised or not. Sense of place is the culmination of space, time, and experience, and for me, as a student and person, this makes sense.

Secondly, I have long history with land that is embedded in my family and our collective understanding of the lived world. My great-grandfather immigrated to Canada from Ireland in the early 1900's to start a life in the "New World." At the time the mantra was "go west young man" and he did this with his family in tow. The key to success for immigrants in Canada was entrepreneurial spirit, and he had ample. He began a small real estate and land development business in Edmonton, Alberta, and soon his entire family was employed. As the company grew, he proceeded to buy more land in and around Edmonton. Land was cheap, and it was primed and ready for development of many kinds. Also, people needed homes to live in, as urbanisation became a reality for new Edmontonians. My great-grandfather eventually passed the company on to my grandfather Stan Melton. Melton Real Estate was a fast growing local business, which gained a reputation for affordable home buying and selling. After WWII, Melton Real Estate was ready for the post war boom in housing development. The land that my great-grandfather purchased many years before was now in demand for development on the outskirts of the city. Much of the land west of downtown Edmonton was developed for homebuyers. The mantra now was "phone a Melton man and start packing." My uncle, Tim Melton, took the company over and expanded, changing the name to Melcor Developments Ltd. The company remained in the home building and residential land development field but also began a thriving commercial sector. The company continues to grow and develop now, ever sensitive to the boom-bust cycles of the west.

I have always been aware of the family business – friends of the family say that sales and land are in the Melton "genes." I definitely did not feel that I fit into this plan as I thought I did not have a "business" bone in my body. However, one of my professors pointed out that indeed I did, having a research focus in land and community development. This was quite a revelation to me at the time. However, since then I have resigned to the fact that I do have something in common with my business-minded family. In fact, now when I travel in and around Edmonton, I often imagine my great-grandfather arriving and surveying the land. I wonder if he could have ever imagined West Edmonton Mall or the proposed mega-city conglomerate. Regardless, my sense of place in Edmonton is deeply rooted in family and the spatial organisation and development of the city. I feel connected here, knowing family members played a part in organizing many of the suburban developments of Edmonton.

Thirdly, I feel that the nature of the topic requires an approach that is open and flexible. As a researcher, I accepted that there were going to be no complete and decisive responses to the research objective. The meanings associated with place are constantly created and recreated, and it is within this process of construction, that many interpretations, applicable to understanding concepts of place are understood. Furthermore, each person has a unique perspective that emerges out of experience, allowing for the discussion of multiple perspectives of place.

Finally, postmodernism is a concept that I was drawn to immediately when I first heard and read about it. It is a theoretical framework that allows for the presence and coexistence of a range of very different features (Jameson, 1991). There is a current movement away from modern formalised knowledge systems. The breakdown of universal narratives shifts emphasis to the local context and to the multiplicity of meanings found in local contexts.

My studies have evolved to include these guiding and reflective approaches.

In conclusion, this inquiry is concerned with how knowledge and understanding of place is produced, how place experiences are mediated and negotiated, and how these things are made real in lived experience. Recreation and leisure studies inform this study primarily; however, the research draws on a variety of fields of study in order to provide a comprehensive analysis. Although the study is localized in the area of Strathcona County, I feel that the elements discussed in this thesis are thought provoking and worthy of lengthy discussion and debate, regardless of geographical place.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Background and Overview

To begin the literature review, it is necessary to contextualize the discussion of sense of place. Therefore, the following chapter attempts to highlight issues and debates within a variety of fields. By exploring the current issues, a case will be made for the importance of considering sense of place in land use planning and management. However, this is not without considerable debate and discussion. Although there is recognition of the need to include a socio-cultural approach in land use planning and management, this approach requires that many additional elements be acknowledged and incorporated. The following literature review addresses the planning and management field and the need for the inclusion of meanings and values into planning and management frameworks. The review then follows with a discussion of place and sense of place. Finally, a critical reading of the literature reveals gaps in current theory and comments on directions for further research. This literature review is ambitious as it attempts to incorporate many diverse approaches to viewing space and place in the lived experience. It is not limited to recreation and leisure studies and attempts to include emergent themes in sociology, cultural geography, cultural studies, feminist theory, and post-colonial studies. Having said this, it has been a challenge to encapsulate these divergent theories into one cohesive discussion of sense of place.

Limitations aside, the literature is fascinating and thought provoking and provides the theoretical context for this thesis.

Decker, Brown, and Knuth (1996) define natural resource management as the integration of ecological, economic, political, social, and cultural insights into decision making that establishes goals for natural resources and initiates actions to achieve them. Increasing attention is being focussed on the necessity for holistic, comprehensive and integrated approaches to land use planning and protected area designation (Swinnerton, 1999; Ewert, 1996; Williams & Patterson, 1994; Schroeder, 1996a, 1996b).

Mechanisms for gathering data regarding the value of land need to be explored more fully to ensure public participation in the planning process and to determine how and why places are seen as important and special. Information about how people feel about the place should guide the planning process, along with the biophysical data. Value-based data can not only inform the process of planning, but also add to the breadth and depth of the knowledge of the particular area. Furthermore, this process offers the opportunity to map diverse and often competing environmental meanings that various people attach to natural resources (Williams & Patterson, 1994). This information can be used in conjunction with biophysical data as input into land use decisions.

Ecosystem management is an example of a planning and management framework that integrates a human component into natural resource management. Ecosystem management integrates scientific knowledge of ecological relationships within a complex socio-political and values framework toward the general goal of protecting ecosystem integrity over the long-term (Grumbine, 1994). The rise of the social science perspective, ecosystem management, and the human dimensions component of natural resources planning and management are evidence of the paradigm shift in the conceptualisation of approaches and frameworks. The ecosystem management perspective offers an ecological and socio-cultural paradigm that involves the development of contextually rich, spatial and historical understandings of place (Williams & Patterson, 1994). As Cortner (1996) notes, "ecosystem management suggests the need for alternative conceptions that equalize the human nature relationship, expand the concept of reason, broaden the scope of scientific inquiry, and create more equal relations among humans" (p. 82). However, it is important to note that some feel that the pendulum has swung too far in favour of the human value perception, discounting the value of natural scientific data (Soulé & Lease, 1995). It is necessary to find a balance between the human and nature perspectives in order for the ecosystem management framework to be fully realised.

Implicit in this approach is the recognition that past efforts at resource management have not adequately dealt with the public's desires to be heard. Consequently, new forms of co-operative working relationships among citizens, scientists, planners, and decision-makers will need to occur (Cortner, 1996). Furthermore, land managers need to take a careful look at deeply held underlying cultural values in order to obtain a real understanding of the groups they are working with (McDonough, 1993). The incorporation of people into the management process requires that meanings and values associated with natural resources be addressed.

Resources do not have value in and of themselves; rather, values develop and are assigned as people use resources to meet human needs that range from survival to spiritual growth (McDonough).

Despite the increased awareness of the value of public participation, there continues to be a lack of understanding of how to integrate public involvement in the planning process (Blahna & Yonts-Shepard, 1989). The concept of sense of place can serve as an underlying principle to guide both ecosystem management and public participation in planning contexts. Both concepts embrace land use meanings that go beyond utilitarian uses and both try to localize and contextualize knowledge while paying close attention to history and geographic scale (Williams & Stewart, 1998). Public participation, planning and policy making must be understood as part and parcel of the creation of place meaning and as ongoing processes that are inseparable from the efforts to map the natural and cultural significance of ecosystems (Williams & Patterson, 1994).

The meanings and values of place can give managers a holistic perspective – one that provides contextual and descriptive data about people's emotional, spiritual, and imaginative relationships with place. As a part of a conceptual model for management, sense of place offers a way to open dialogue and bring people to the table to discuss what is meaningful to them. It is necessary to connect with people who are actively living, working, and recreating in the landscape to capture the special and meaningful qualities that people ascribe to particular places. Different levels of intensity of place are influenced by individual and social values, but in turn, they influence the values, attitudes, and more importantly the behaviour of the individual and society (Shamai, 1991).

It is important to recognise that research about place and landscape is not new. On the contrary, work related to landscape and place has been a focal point for many researchers, mainly human geographers, since the 1960's (Tuan, 1980, 1977, 1974; Relph, 1976; Appleton, 1975; Meinig, 1979; Jackson, 1994; Ley, 1991). While human geographers recognised psychological bonds with place and brought these concepts to the forefront of geography, current research is being influenced by changes in social theory as a whole. New directions in psychology, social psychology, sociology and cultural geography suggest acknowledgement of multiple realities and understandings of place that focus on the social and cultural construction of environmental meanings (Hayden, 1997; Casey, 1996; Greider & Garkovich, 1994; Duncan & Ley, 1993; Simmons, 1993; Barnes & Duncan, 1992; Shields, 1991; Hummon, 1990: Bachelard, 1994). This highlights the evolution of ideas concerning landscape and place but also points to the interdisciplinary nature of the study and the potential for further cross-disciplinary work in the future. Likewise, the resurgence of place- and landscape-related ideas directly coincides with major developments in the natural resources planning and management field, primarily the recognition of human meanings and values as an integral aspect of the ecosystem. To frame this analysis, a discussion of place, sense of place, and implications of a sense of place approach is merited.

B. A Discussion of Place

"Place is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so over filled that one can never shut the lid" (Hayden, 1997, p. 112). The quotation suggests the myriad definitions and meanings associated with the term "place." Place is used to refer to region, community, setting, space, and environment. The term place is most commonly associated with location or the spatial distribution of social and economic activities. It is a word used to describe the settings for routine social interaction in space, and, as a fixed location, implies a position within a broader context. Although place is most frequently used to delineate a situated location in space, there is a fluidity of place influenced by the interaction of nature and culture. People move in and between place and across and through borders defining places. As a result, places are unique, yet they are connected together by the circulation of people within the environment.

The word place also represents and describes position in a social hierarchy. Phrases such as "knowing one's place" or a "woman's place" continue to have both physical and political connotations that connect social relationships with spatial perception (Hayden, 1997). It is evident that the term "place" has broader meanings that extend beyond geographical definitions. Place, for example, can serve as a context for action, as a source of identity, and as a focus of environmental meaning (Entrikin, 1990). Williams and Patterson (1994) state that the common meanings of the word place in the social sciences are (a) location: the spatial distribution of social and economic activities, (b) locale: the setting for routine social interaction provided in a place; and (c) sense of place: the identification with a place emotionally or symbolically.

Most contemporary place theories define place as a physical location with the following three components: the physical setting, human activities, and the human psychological process relating to it (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995). Research concerned with determining the role that place has in human experience has been largely influenced by place attachment (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Stokols & Schumaker, 1981). Place attachments have been analysed using place dependence and place identity theories (Williams et al., 1992). Place dependence is associated with the potential of a particular place to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual and the assessment of the current place with other available settings that may satisfy the same needs (Stokols & Schumaker, 1981). This view emphasises the importance of the uniqueness of place to perform certain activities within place. As Williams et al. note, a term like dependence connotes the overall necessity attached to a specific place for enjoying a leisure pursuit rather than the suitability of specific attributes making up the setting as a whole. The term *action space* is used to refer to that part of the environment which has place utility to the individual and with which the individual is therefore familiar (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993). Activity space is that part of the action space with which an individual interacts on an everyday basis (Walmsley & Lewis).

Place identity refers to those dimensions essential to the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment (Proshansky, 1978). This view supports the role place has in contributing to personal identity. Korpela (1989) links place identity to environmental self regulation by arguing that the environment is not only a mediator in regulating social interaction but also a means of creating and maintaining one's self. Concurrently, the importance of place in defining one's identity contributes strongly to the emotional connection of people and place. Research shows that place identity transcends personal identity and influences culture as a whole (Lee, 1972). The effects of personal place identity are evidenced in the creation of symbols and signs that are shared by society on a cultural level. Culturally, identity is determined by social and institutional linkages that connect people to place and dictate how they should behave and lead their lives (Hough, 1990). These types of meanings are assigned by individuals, groups, or society without necessarily involving a strong correspondence between the physical attributes of the place and its meaning (Williams et al., 1992).

Early research in the area of place attachment emphasises the affective bonds that develop in a place primarily because of length of residency. Janovitz and Kasarda (as cited in Giuliani & Feldman, 1993) include three elements that are measures of community place attachment: feeling of belonging, interest in home area, and sentiment about leaving. Unger and Wandersman (as cited in Guiliani & Feldman, 1993) explore feelings of social connectedness in place and determine three kinds of bonds that are important in understanding social cognitive and affective bonds with place: sense of mutual aid, sense of community, and attachment to place. Recently there has been a shift in the literature away from focussing on the behavioural dimension to viewing these bonds as enduring and changeable processes related to the construction and maintenance of identity in a changing social and physical environment. This purports a process of viewing place attachment as a dynamic relationship that changes and evolves over the life span.

The development of place attachment as a field of study brings much more breadth to the understanding of people-place relationships than the more general works of humanistic geographers such as Relph and Tuan (Hay, 1998). Sense of place studies offer an opportunity to move beyond the purely aesthetic to an assessment of bonds with a home place, the social construction of a geographic locality, and community connections with place. Williams et al. (1992) studied the relationship of place attachment and wilderness places and specific sites. The authors identify two types of possible attachment: attachment to the specific area itself and attachment to the type of area it represents. This study highlights personal place relationships, as a result of direct involvement, but also the effects of socio-cultural processes in the development of symbolic social and cultural place identification. Bricker and Kerstetter (1998), in a study of whitewater recreationists, outline the following dimensions of place meanings: (a) environmental landscape, (b) human-social, (c) recreation, (d) heritage-historic, and (e) commodity.

Place attachment has been linked to recreation settings; however, there is limited knowledge about the nature of place attachment and to what people are attached (Kaltenborn, 1997). In a study of place attachment of recreation homeowners in Southern Norway, Kaltenborn examines a range of attributes such as natural and cultural environments, family and social activities, history, and traditions as indicators of strength of attachment and the target of place attachment. The results show social interaction, identification with history and culture, as well as communing with nature and the physical environment to be important factors in place attachment. The sense of place or sets of meanings associated with the recreation homes and the surrounding settings are intertwined with natural, social, historical and cultural processes (Kaltenborn). In conclusion, place attachment research has focussed on affective bonds, the evolution of affective bonds over the life-course, and the implications of people-place attachment.

The creation of place is predicated on two factors: the social and cultural contexts of the meanings, values, traditions, and experiences of people who describe and define a space as a place, and the nature of a given space, or the spirit of place – *genius loci* (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995). Although places have a fixed location and possess features which persist in an unidentifiable form, it is argued that the meaning of a place relies on more than location or function. Norberg-Schultz (1980) discusses *genius loci* as the unmeasurable, unobjectifiable character of a place and its importance to humans. The *genius-loci* conceptualisation of place emphasises that there are qualities inherent to place the serve to give a broader meaning. Garnham (1985) uses the term *genius loci* to refer to the spirit of place as it relates to an individual uniqueness, character, identity, and spirit, which differentiates one place from another. Factors which serve to give place a unique character, or a strong sense of place include: architectural style, climate, natural setting, memory and metaphor, the use of local materials, craftsmanship, cultural diversity and history, social values, public environments, and daily and seasonal activities (Garnham, 1985).

The place characteristics outlined by Garnham (1985) have been used in conjunction with many urban planning initiatives. The idea is that each place will contain locally special attributes, which produce a spirit of place and a sense of well being among the residents of that place. The special attributes that serve to give place a unique quality are natural environments, cultural expression, and the sensory experience, which results from the interaction of culture (Garnham). At the core of this process is the role of the local population identifying important aspects of place and being involved in the framework for the growth and development of the place. The goal of this process is to recognise local population's experience of place and then foster local planning and design decision making that reflect their needs and desires (Garnham). Although useful for understanding the local context, outside influence and globalization disrupt the notion that the local is the most significant influence on the creation of places. Place creation is produced by the complex interaction of local and global influences.

Value is assigned to place and is manifested by the desire to live and visit particular places. By conceptualising place as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience and by examining properties of place such as location, landscape, individual, social, and cultural involvement, some assessment can be made of the extent to which these properties are essential to people's experience in place (Relph, 1976). Place is a socially constructed space; it is a physical location that has been assigned meaning and value. Relph (1976) states that the spirit of place lies in its landscape. There is a persistence of place, or continuity in the appearance and spirit of place, just as in individual people. The identity of a particular place can persist through many external changes because there is an inner force (spirit) acting upon the space (Relph, 1976).

C. Sense of Place

Sense of place is the identification with place symbolically or emotionally. Tuan (1977) describes sense of place as the "affective or emotional bond between an individual and a particular place" (p. 7). Undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with values (Tuan, 1977). Tuan coined the word "topophilia" to refer to the affective bond that develops between people and place, resulting in encounters with place that are intensely personal and profoundly significant. An individual's sense of place is both a physical response to the surrounding physical environment and a cultural creation (Tuan).

Affective bonds between people and geographical space are primarily experienced through long-term involvement with and in place. The lengthy interaction produces long-lasting bonds with place that result in strong emotional connections. This aspect of place attachment constitutes our roots in place; the familiarity that this involves is not just detailed knowledge, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place (Tuan, 1980). Relph (1976) discusses rootedness as being inside and belonging to your place, both as an individual and as a member of your community. Rootedness implies a familiarity with place that is a result of long habitation or length of residency; the length of time in one place allows people to set up roots in place. In its essence, rootedness means being completely at home and unreflectively secure and comfortable in a particular locality (Tuan).

In Relph's work it is implied, rather than explicitly stated, that rootedness is a main contributor to feelings of sense of place. However, as Tuan (1980) notes, rootedness implies being at home in an unselfconscious way, whereas sense of place implies a certain distance that allows the self to appreciate a place. According to Tuan, feelings of sense of place require a certain amount of personal reflexivity that contributes to the ability of people to distinguish between places on the basis of affective or emotional bonds to that particular place. In this way, sense of place is seen as constantly evolving and changing; a concept that is reliant on orientation to place, identities of place, and social and cultural associations with place. The most meagre meaning of sense of place is the ability to recognise different places and different identities of place (Tuan). The place and the personal commitment to exploring the spirit of place combine to produce an understanding of people-place relationships, relationships that potentially supersede the length of residency in place or the amount of knowledge of a particular place.

Hay (1998) distinguishes sense of place from place attachment by considering the social and geographical context of place bonds and the sensing of places, such as aesthetics and feelings associated with dwelling. By studying residents and out-migrants in a developmental continuum, the author investigated a sense of place that is based on rootedness and community attachment. Hay (1998) devised five subgroups to conceptualise sense of place: superficial connection to place (tourists and transients); partial connection to place (cottagers and children); personal connection (new residents without roots in the place), ancestral connection (residents with roots); and cultural connection (indigenous residents with both roots in the place and spiritual ties, as affirmed by culture). The results indicated that a feeling of dwelling should be included in the description of rootedness, whereas types of insideness should be considered as bondedness, as an ancestral or cultural sense of place. Hay (1998) concludes by stating that if sense of place is allowed to fully develop, it can provide feelings of security, belonging, and stability. This study reflects a conceptualisation of sense of place that acknowledges length of residency as an important component of feelings of sense of place. However, it is important to point out that research also reflects sense of place as being an important element to both tourists and short-term residents. Thus, it may be the case that the term sense of place does not fit into the above categories so neatly.

In a more general discussion of sense of place, Steele (1981) describes it as a transactional relationship between the setting and what a person brings to the place. Therefore, people do not exist without a place, and place does not exist without people assigning value or meaning to that place. The processes of creating sense of place and a sense of purpose within us because of place occur at an individual level and also extend to include social and cultural value systems (Rodiek, 1988). Although necessary to gaining an understanding of place relationships, these definitions presuppose that affective bonds with geographical space are both universal and necessary relationships with place that are ultimately seen as contributing to positive psychological well-being. However, empirical research in this area shows that dysfunctional place relationships are equally possible (Fried, 1966). Depending on situation or circumstance, place relationships may exist but they may not necessarily contribute to positive feelings of well-being.

Of importance to the sense of place concept is the role of cultural and social processes in constructing place and a sense of place. It is through these processes that place meanings are constructed, negotiated, and politically contested (Williams & Stuart, 1998). Landscapes are the symbolic environments created by human acts of conferring meaning to nature and the environment, of giving the environment definition and form from a particular perspective and through a special filter of values and beliefs (Greider & Garkovich, 1994). This highlights the process of humans giving, inscribing, and imbuing meaning and value to the environment. Stokowski (1994) states that sense of place is socially and politically created, shared, and sustained. This contributes to an understanding of place and landscape by articulating the role of social processes in the experience of valued and important places. Stokowski identifies places as visible manifestations of the persistence of actions and structures. This view supports an understanding of how aspects of place affect the reproduction of social systems. Social processes need to be understood within the contextual nature of social interaction, in other words, the place in which they occur.

Cultural groups transform the natural environment into landscapes and places through the use of different symbols that bestow different meanings on the same physical objects or conditions (Greider & Garkovich, 1994). The cultural context, therefore, dictates how physical objects are constructed and negotiated in social and group processes. Concurrently, it is apparent that landscapes reflect culture and individuals within social groups. In this way, place is viewed as a constantly becoming and evolving human product as well as a set of features visible upon the landscape. Landscape and place embody the reproduction of social and cultural forms, the formation of biographies, and the transformation of the physical environment (Pred, 1984). Greider and Garkovich emphasise the social construction of the landscape by highlighting the need to explore the symbolic creation of landscape, the cultural meanings of aspects of the physical environment and biophysical changes in this environment, and the values and beliefs that sustain these symbols and their meanings.

Social theorist Henry Lefebvre (1991) argues that authentic knowledge of space must address the question of its production. He suggests that space is a medium through which social life is produced and reproduced. Lefebvre suggests we need to examine these areas as political territories. Concurrently, race, class, sexuality, and gender can be mapped as places of social reproduction that occur at various scales within space. Space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but is also producing and produced by social relations (Lefebvre). Building on this idea, Kaplan (1996) notes that the rise of a specific class and its hegemonic practices produce systems of knowledge, modes of representation, and social relations that include the production of space. As people in place, we are products of both history and geography. Location is discontinuous, constituted in multiple ways, and traversed by diverse social formations (Kaplan).

There used to be more of an investment in the land because being tied to a stable place contributed to one's well-being and survival (Hough, 1990). However, space and place have also been analysed with reference to an increasingly global understanding of the world, with emphasis on consumption and technology. Sense of place in the post-modern world ends up at worst being produced and marketed as image and at best as places reorganized as museums (Harvey, 1989). Harvey discusses the unprecedented scale of destruction, invasion, and restructuring of place caused by changing material practices of production, consumption, and information flow and communication coupled with the radical reorganization of space relations and of time horizons within capitalist development.

The elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement, and communication (Harvey).

Similarly, Kaplan (1996) discusses the current age as being characterized by market fragmentation, flexible accumulation, increasingly de-centred social, political, and economic forms of organisation, and the movement of transnational capital confounding distinct traditional modern borders and cultures. The politics of experiencing places are contested territory. As traditional borders disappear and are constantly evolving, the association between space and identity is also contentious. Human experience of place intertwines the sense of place and the politics of space. Relph (1997) notes that "exploring the transferred landscapes and reconstituted nationalisms of postmodernity affirms the need for a common sense of place as an essential foundation for a balanced attitude of judgement that celebrates difference yet recognises that there is much that different cultures can share without undermining their distinctiveness" (p. 218).

The planning and management of natural resources calls for multiple perspective of place, but this has yet to be fully realised. How do we see ourselves in space and how do we find our place in the world? To actually "place" individuals in space is difficult to conceptualise. People in space do not have precise boundaries; we are only partially locatable in time and space. Individuals act in time and space by being located, moving, encountering, interpreting, feeling, and doing, meaning that there is not only one subject acting but many realising different conflicting subject positions (Thrift & Pile, 1995). To understand how the individual is placed in the context of the geographic world requires analysis of location in various discourses of power. As Thrift and Pile explain, the co-ordinates of subjectivity are reproduced both through discursive practices and through power laden regulatory practices. Furthermore, individuals translate between and across categories (Thrift & Pile). The individual is mapped as a subject through the body and subjectivity; practices which come to be seen as natural through spatial referents such as position, movement, encounter and vision (Thrift & Pile).

Minh-ha (as cited in Thrift & Pile, 1995) states that the practice of subjectivity is one that is still unaware of its own constituted nature. Subjectivity plays a continuous role in the production of meaning; therefore, the subject is unaware of the perpetuating production of representations. We are placed in worlds of negotiating power relations, constantly reworking our own ideas of ourselves, and in doing so, continuously changing our meaning in place and our understanding of place.

To understand how places are created from pure space involves an examination of the relationship between space and time. We have a sense of space because we move and of time because we undergo recurrent phases of tension and ease (Tuan, 1977). Understandably, people differ in their awareness of space and time, and this magnifies different spatio-temporal realities of individuals and their experience in place. Activity, in space, makes space and time relative to how the self is oriented in the environment and distance becomes a meaningless spatial concept apart from the idea of a goal or a place (Tuan, 1977). Tuan relates place as a pause in time that occurs through movement in space. The pause, the time taken to experience, makes it possible for a locality to become a centre of felt value.

As Jameson (1991) notes, the distinction is between the interrelationship of time and space, rather than between these two inseparable categories themselves. Therefore, space and time are not pure experiences in themselves.

As Williams and Stuart (1998) note, sense of place is commonly referred to as place relationships that are based on a local understanding of place. However, local senses of place relationships do not encompass the depth and breadth of place experiences. In many instances tourists and regular visitors to natural areas, experience profound place experiences. Thus, arguments of familiarity and rootedness do not necessarily apply. The movement from a localized sense of place to a more holistic version means that land use planners and managers have to address deeper meanings associated with place that encompass a variety of place experiences. As Cuthburtson, Heine and Whitson (1997) caution, downplaying the role of travelling in the development of a deep sense of place is, at best, ignoring the cultural and political issues at hand, and at worst, destructive to attempts at building positive relationships among places. The authors state that rootedness is a romanticized notion that reflects either a privileged position of being able to stay in one place over time or ignores those that have inherently mobile lifestyles. Furthermore, the potential for oppressive social conditions within the context of community may prove to be an effective barrier to the realisation of the deepest and most profound sense of places (Cuthbertson et al., 1997).

The centre of methodological debates about measurement of sense of place lies in determining the role of meanings in landscape and place relationships. Williams and Patterson (1994) explore the word "meaning" in order to understand the role of groups in the transmission of culture and the development of cultural symbols with respect to place. The human mind is a meaning-making system (Bruner, as cited in Williams & Patterson, 1994). Baumeister (1991) notes that meanings can be categorised into two broad categories: discerning patterns in the environment and controlling oneself, including regulating one's internal states. Meaning can represent the interpretation the individual imbues on a place and meanings can be symbolically and socially determined and sustained through time. Individuals do not create meaning on their own; and value judgements from their society (Baumeister, 1991).

Williams and Patterson (1994) present four approaches to understanding the full range of landscape meanings: scenic/aesthetic, activity/goal properties, socio-cultural meanings, and individual expressive meanings. The **scenic/aesthetic** approach emphasises tangible features of the landscape that can be easily measured and then translated into design. This usually involves rating particular landscape features by identifying visual quality. The **activity/goal properties** approach views leisure activities or the goals that may be fulfilled through the recreational use of a resource (Williams & Patterson, 1994). The emphasis is on the perceived utility of various attributes of the setting in satisfying recreation goals. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and benefits based management represents recreation settings as tangible properties that can be inventoried and managed to provide opportunities to fulfil a diversity of experiences and activity goals (Driver, 1987). The **socio-cultural meaning** approach emphasises that places acquire social and political meanings through human interaction over time. This is a broader framework that embraces both tangible and intangible aspects of place and landscape. The **individual expressive meaning** approach builds on the socio-cultural approach but includes the role of individuals in assigning relatively unique meanings to places and things. Place attachment and identity are constructed, maintained, and transformed through interaction in the landscape (Williams & Patterson, 1994).

Williams and Carr (1993) use a framework developed by Fournier (1991) to characterize place meanings: tangibility, emotionality, and commonality. Tangibility refers to the concrete meanings that are functional in nature that are symbolized and assigned to place by individuals and culture. Environmental symbolism refers to the tendency of physical objects and places to gradually acquire social meaning through their association and over time with particular activities or groups (Stokols, 1990). Places, therefore, have a function, but they also have emotional, symbolic, and spiritual value. Emotionality can be thought of as an indication of the depth or extent of meaning with symbolic and spiritual meanings often associated with high levels of attachment to an object or place (Williams & Carr). Place attachment, including place identity and place dependence, would fall into this category, emphasising place as being an essential part of people's lives. Commonality refers to the degree to which meanings are individualized or socially defined and held (Fournier). The social structure dictates the degree to which place meanings implicate a specific group and a place (Williams & Carr).

In conclusion, for most people, sense of place refers to the rich and varied meanings of places and emphasises people's tendency to form strong emotional bonds with places (Williams & Stuart, 1998). Williams and Stuart offer a composite of place definitions and distinguish between the different interpretations and uses of the word. This concept of sense of place is multifaceted, complex and has a variety of definitions and meanings. Sense of place is:

- the emotional bonds that people have with places (at various geographic scales) over time and with familiarity with those places;
- the strongly felt values, meanings, and symbols that are hard to identify or know (and hard to quantify);
- the valued qualities of a place that even an insider may not be consciously aware of until they are threatened or lost;
- the set of place meanings that are actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed within individual minds, shared cultures, and social practices; and
- the awareness of the cultural, historical, and spatial context within which meanings, values, and social interactions are formed.

The literature review presents an overview of sense of place. A discussion of natural resource management and ecosystem management is included to contextualize sense of place in the field of natural resource management. The review follows with a general discussion of place to a more specific analysis of sense of place. The literature review highlights the socio-cultural perspective inherent in people-landscape relationships and is offered as one element of the planning process that should be integrated along with the natural science perspective.

It is the opinion of the author that current theories do not reflect the depth of the term. Hence there is a danger of using sense of place and joining the sense of place parade (Williams & Stuart, 1998) without fully recognising the breadth of the concept. For the purposes of recreation and leisure studies and natural resource management, there is a need to frame what will be included in a conceptual framework of sense of place so as to incorporate a sense of place approach into planning and management frameworks.

As is reflected in the literature, some categories and definitions of place and sense of place can serve as useful frameworks but do not necessarily encompass all aspects of the term. To adequately reflect the breadth and depth of the term, sense of place definitions and frameworks should reflect plurality and inclusiveness. Having said that, sense of place is difficult to categorize because it is so illusive and fluid. Sense of place is a term that blurs boundaries and crosses over commonly accepted constructs and ways of viewing the world. Sense of place requires more research and analysis to fully understand the term. Hence, this research project is exploratory, reflecting a general inquiry into "what is sense of place" and a more specific question of "what is the sense of place to the people of Strathcona." The literature reflects an overview of the relevant concepts and theories of place and sense of place. It is the intersection and overlap of the literature that is of importance to this study. Sense of place means affective relationships between people and place; however, if social and cultural processes are fully examined, sense of place means much more.

Much of the earlier research in landscape and place was concerned with the physical and material rather than the social. However, the physical expression of culture in the landscape is limited and reflects a definition of culture that is founded solely on a physical and material basis. In current scholarship, culture emerges as a domain in which economic and political contradictions are contested (Jackson, 1989). This view attempts to take the definitions of culture and the role of cultural geography into areas that are spatially and politically located rather than driven by method and technique. As the following quotation from Ley (1981) can attest, the evolution of ideas is a marked transition:

> *In retrieving man from virtual oblivion in positivist science, humanists have tended to celebrate the restoration perhaps too much. As a result, meanings, values, consciousness, creativity, and reflection may well have been overstated, while context, constraint, and social stratification have been under-developed.*

The goal of this research is to employ a multidisciplinary approach in order to intertwine some of the concepts used in the management literature with theories in cultural geography that focus on the multiplicity of meanings associated with understanding individual, social, and cultural place relationships. The literature review provides a comprehensive framework to explore how selected residents of Strathcona County articulate their views on sense of place.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

A. An Introduction to Methodology and Data Analysis

Chapter Three begins with an overview of the study area of Strathcona County. Relevant information regarding the nature of the community is presented in order to contextualize the study. Following the overview of the study area, a brief explanation of the theoretical approach towards qualitative methodology is given focussing on an examination of qualitative methodology. A brief overview of the hermeneutical approach to qualitative methodology is explained using the framework of the Seven Canons of Hermeneutical Research as outlined by Kvale (1996). The methods section follows, with attention to the process of conducting in-depth interviews. A brief discussion of the participant sample and ethical considerations is presented. A discussion of the process of data analysis is presented to demonstrate the rigor and depth applied to the interpretive paradigm. Finally, the framework used to analyse emergent themes is defined encapsulating the discussion of methodology, methods, and data analysis.

B. Study Area: Strathcona County

An overview of the study area is necessary to understand the context of the research project and the participant sample (Figures 3.1 & 3.2). Strathcona County is adjacent to Edmonton, the fifth-largest city in Canada. Metro-Edmonton is home to

25,000 businesses and is the major supply centre for central and northern Alberta. Strathcona County is the fourth largest municipality in Alberta and home to over 65,000 residents. Strathcona County is comprised of an affluent population with a median family income of over $67,500 per year (Strathcona County, 2000).

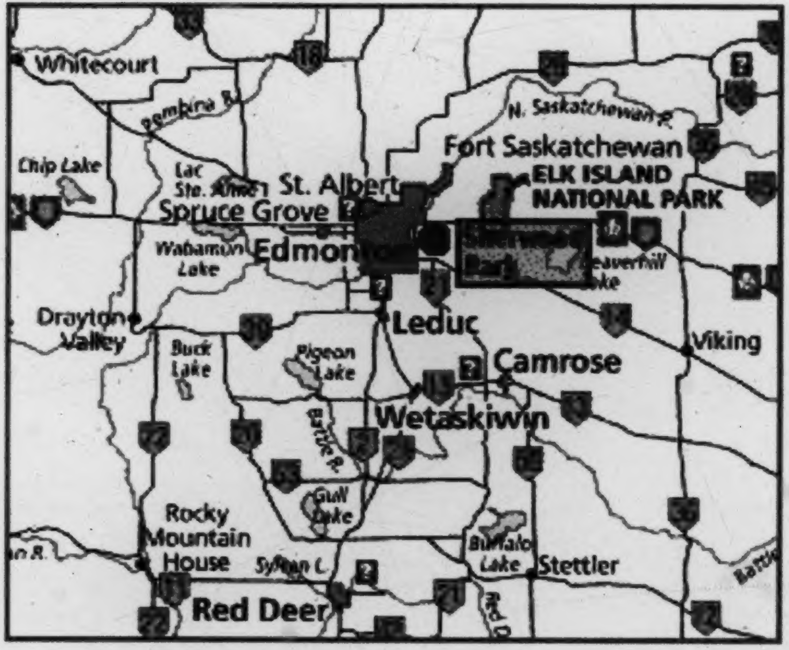

Whitecourt
N. Saskatchewan R.
Fort Saskatchewan
ELK ISLAND
NATIONAL PARK
Chip Lake
Lac Ste. Anne
St. Albert
Spruce Grove
Wabamun Lake
Edmonton
Beaverhill Lake
Drayton Valley
Leduc
Viking
Buck Lake
Pigeon Lake
Camrose
Wetaskiwin
Battle R.
Gull Lake
Rocky Mountain House
Buffalo Lake
Stettler
Sylvan L.
Red Deer

Figure 3.1: Map of Sherwood Park in relation to the nearest major urban centre, Edmonton, Alberta.

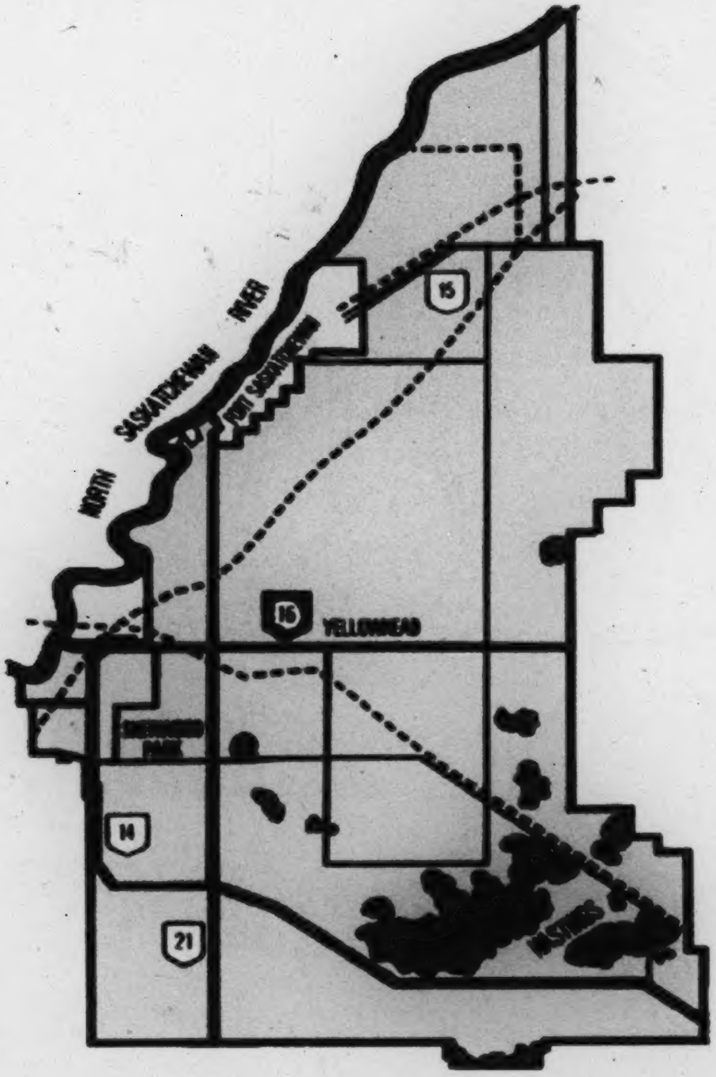

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
15
16 YELLOWHEAD
SHERWOOD PARK
14
21
HASTINGS

Figure 3.2: Map of Strathcona County, Alberta

Incomes of the population in the immediate area are above average, as Strathcona County has the highest average income of any Alberta municipality with a population over 50,000 people (Strathcona County).

The area has seen a long history of competing land uses, such as agriculture, industrial and residential development, and recreation and tourism activities across a mosaic of private and public lands (Burak & Swinnerton, 1997). Nearly 94,000 hectares (232,000 acres) are under agricultural production in Strathcona County. There are approximately 900 farms, in particular there are 220 grain producing farms and 280 beef producing farms (Strathcona County, 2000). Most agricultural activities are concentrated in two areas. Annual crops are grown north of the Yellowhead Highway, an area characterized by its excellent soil quality, whereas, livestock and perennial forage production are found predominantly south of the Yellowhead Highway. The remaining farming operations can be categorised as mixed, dairy, or speciality, being elk, buffalo, or ostrich. Strathcona County is the home of 12 greenhouse growers totalling over 31,000 square metres (334,000 square feet) of greenhouse production and 135 hectares (334 acres) of horticultural crops (Strathcona County). In addition to agriculture, the metro-Edmonton region, including Strathcona County, is the supply and service centre for Alberta's oil and gas industry. The County is ranked first in Canada for petro-chemical manufacturing.

Since 1990, industrial building space in Strathcona County has increased by over 91,935 square metres; commercial space has increased by 510,038 square metres. In

1998, 100 new businesses were started, creating 1147 new jobs. Strathcona County currently has an estimated 2,200 businesses, ranging from one-person operations to plants with over 400 employees (Strathcona County, 2000).

Both short- and long-term residents live in Strathcona County, in the rural or outlying areas and in the urban area of Sherwood Park. The thriving agriculture and livestock sector has resulted in many residents located in myriad small centres in and around the County. Strathcona residents have access to a variety of urban amenities. Sherwood Park, embedded in the municipality of Strathcona County, is a leading Alberta urban centre with over 42,000 people. Not yet considered a city, Sherwood Park is a unique urban centre in that it holds the distinction of being the world's largest hamlet. Sherwood Park contains numerous restaurants, drug stores, medical clinics, grocery stores, retail shops, professional services, and banks. In addition, Strathcona County residents have the advantage of a full range of health care, social services, police and emergency response units (Strathcona County, 2000).

Strathcona County is home to numerous leisure and recreation facilities and activities. The County borders Elk Island National Park and Blackfoot Recreation area to the east, the North Saskatchewan River to the Northwest and the city of Edmonton to the west. To the south of Strathcona County is the Ministik Bird Sanctuary.

The area of Strathcona County was chosen as the focus of this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, Strathcona County represents an area characterized by rapid growth with many competing land use issues. The area is a compilation of both traditional land use such as agriculture, but the area also exemplifies urban sprawl to outlying. Sherwood

Park, specifically, is a community in the midst of rapid change. The cultural landscape has changed from primarily a commuter suburban community to a city centre with many urban amenities. As the community continues to grow outward to the rural areas of Strathcona County, land use issues will become more acute. Furthermore, Strathcona County is an area characterized by a high level of ecological biodiversity. It was originally assumed that people would discuss this in relation to their sense of place. However, as the data will show, the respondents were for the most part unaware or this or did not discuss their community in this way. Strathcona County epitomises the rural urban nexus. As North American communities sprawl further outward the face of the community changes significantly. The rationale for choosing this area as the focus of this study was to look at a community with many different land use issues and to determine how people discuss this in relation to their sense of place or their feeling of well being and belonging in their community. Having said that, although Strathcona County is unique in its own right, it is arguable that many communities across North America are facing many of the same issues with geographic and population growth. Of interest to this study in particular is how people discuss the issues in their community in relation to how they articulate their feelings of sense of place. Although, this thesis is by no means intended to generalize across similar North American communities, it does open up discussion of what is important and meaningful to the residents of that particular community. In this way, some of the data may be useful when applied to other suburban communities.

C. Methodological Approach

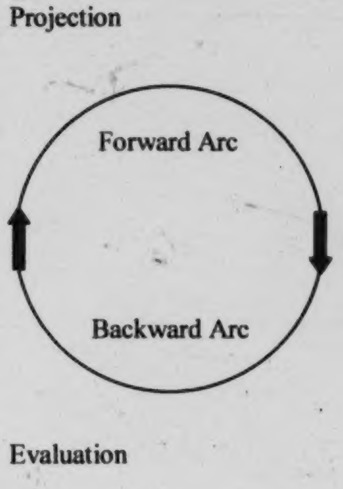
The following discussion presents an overview of the methodological approach used to examine meanings and values associated with landscape and place, a rationale for the use of qualitative methods, and a discussion of the hermeneutic approach adopted for this study.

Benton (1994), acknowledging the independent reality of nature, proposes a sociological understanding of relationships between society and nature. The basic conceptual framework of sociology has been to utilise the binary opposition structure in order to organize and categorize opposing ideas and concepts. Examples of dualistic oppositions most commonly used are subject and object; meaning and cause; mind and matter; human and animal; and culture and nature (Benton). Davis (1996) proposes a scientific approach that can be applied to the study of the human spirit and its relation to nature advocating methodological pluralism and an expanded conceptualisation.

Included in this approach is the integration of postmodernism to shift the focus from control and progress to realisation of the full potential of the whole and its parts. The breakdown of universal narratives shifts emphasis to the local context and to the multiplicity of meanings found in local contexts. The idea that the objective world is distinct from subjective images is confounded. Focus shifts to the interpretation and negotiation of meanings and signs and texts in the social world. Sociology of science recognises science and technology as productive forces and considers the cultural aspects of science (Benton). The need to understand what the environment means to those who interact with it has led to the adoption of a hermeneutic perspective which argues that people-environment interaction is best understood by focussing on the way in which humans experience and interpret their surroundings (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993). A hermeneutical approach allows for specific descriptions of setting and experience (Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998).

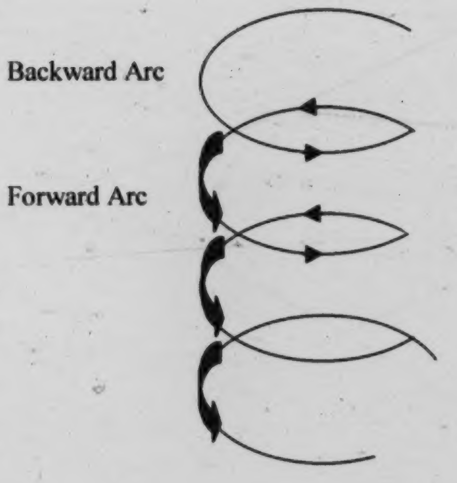
The hermeneutical approach is the interpretation of meanings that is concerned with specifying the kinds of meanings sought with attention to the questions posed to the material (Kvale, 1996). Concepts of conversation and text are pivotal to the analysis, as the understanding between the researcher and subject is possible only to the extent that people can initiate a conversation between themselves and bring about a fusion of their different perspectives into new understanding (Smith, 1991). The meanings of expressions are brought into being through the encounter of the interpreter and interpreted, and these meanings are constantly shaped and reshaped as the research process unfolds.

The hermeneutical approach is most adequately explained using the metaphor of a circle (Packer & Addison, 1989). The hermeneutic circle (Figure 3.3 & 3.4) emphasises the circular relationship between understanding and interpreting and highlights the importance of a background context in the process of interpretation. The entrance is guided by the forestructure of the interpreter that serves to articulate the researcher's preliminary understanding of the subject. The background that the interpreter brings to the inquiry will shape the understanding of the intentions and motivations that stand behind the topic, but also the interpreter's own understanding (Smith, 1993). The forward arc of the hermeneutic circle makes understanding possible, while the return arc provides an opportunity to evaluate that interpretation.



Entails making sense of an entity or set of data by drawing on one's forestructure which is the current product of one's autobiography (beliefs, values, interests, interpretive frameworks) and one's relationship to the question or problem.

Figure 3.3: The Hermeneutical Circle (Ellis, in press)



Each loop in the spiral represents a separate inquiry activity within the study.

Each loop may represent a separate "data collection and analysis" activity or it may represent returning to a constant set of data with a different question.

Often the question for each new loop has been influenced or arrived at through what was uncovered by the inquiry represented by the previous loop.

Figure 3.4: The Hermeneutical Loop (Ellis, in press)

Kvale (1996) outlines the seven canons of hermeneutical research:

1. The understanding of the text takes place through a process in which the meaning of the separate parts is determined by the meaning of the whole. Each part influences the other contributing to the infinite process of gaining access to the meaning.
2. The back and forth process between the parts and the whole ends when the interpreter has reached good gestalt. This is represented by an inner unity of text free of logical contradictions and when the meanings of different themes make patterns that are logical and coherent.
3. The process requires the testing of interpretation. This requires the interpreter to enter into a dialogue with the subjects about the meaning of their statements, enabling the interpreter to deepen and extend the interview statements and in the process clarify the text.
4. The text should be understood on the basis of its own frame of reference.
5. The hermeneutic process necessitates knowledge of the topic in question. The researcher must be sensitive to nuances of meanings expressed and the different contexts into which meanings may come into being.
6. The process of interpretation is not presuppositionless. Rather, the researcher cannot interpret without acknowledging his or her understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the interpreter's understanding must be included in the account of the interpretation.
7. Within hermeneutics there is an inherent notion of creativity that allows the researcher to go beyond what is given and embrace the differentiations and interrelations present in the text.

Thus, there is an element of spontaneity in the research process that allows the interpreter to flexible and adaptable throughout the process (pp. 48-49).

The goal of this research is to uncover the meaning that is inherent to the text of conversation. The way the meaning is uncovered depends on the interpretive process that serves to allow the meaning to reveal itself (Kvale, 1996).

D. Methods

The methods section will outline the participant sample, the use of in-depth interviews as a means of data collection, and the method of data analysis. The method of data analysis section will include a detailed description of interaction with the data and the specific approach taken to organize, analyse, and interpret the interview material.

a) In-depth Interviews

Since the hermeneutic process is based on interpreting meaning through text, in-depth interviews were employed as the primary method of data collection. The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale, 1996). Interviews can provide deep and meaningful data that reveal each individual's perspective. The purpose of the in-depth interview is to obtain description of the life world of the participant with respect to interpreting the meaning of the topic (Peshkin, 1993). The conversational approach to the interview process gives the interpreter an opportunity to learn about experiences, feelings, and hopes in a semi-structured format.

The interview gives no direct access to unadultered provinces of pure meanings but is a social production of meanings through linguistic interaction (Kvale, 1996).

The number of subjects necessary depends on the purpose and nature of the study. In current interview studies, the number of interviews tends to be around 15±10 (Kvale, 1996). This number is likely due to a combination of the time and resources available for the research project. A common critique of this type of interview study is that the findings are not generalizable because they are not statistically representative of large populations. If the aim is to obtain more general knowledge, then the focus should be on a few intensive case studies (Kvale). Focussing on fewer cases makes it possible to investigate in detail the relationship of a specific behaviour to its context, to work out the logic of the relationship between the individual and the situation (Kvale). The humanistic view implies that every situation is unique. Each phenomenon has its own intrinsic structure and logic; therefore, the quest for universal knowledge is replaced by an emphasis on the heterogeneity and contextuality of knowledge, with a shift from generalization to contextualization.

In this study, the data collection process consisted of formal interviews that were tape-recorded. Each interview was conducted with the participant's written consent, attained by the researcher prior to the interview. The interviews were transcribed and coded to secure confidentiality. The transcription of the interviews began immediately after the first interview was completed. On hearing the interviews again, and then writing, many ideas came to the forefront of my thinking. The transcription was specific and detailed; nuances were noted, including laughter, pauses, uncertainty, sadness and other emotions. When I read the transcriptions over, the details helped to trigger memories of the interview and set the context. One challenge of qualitative methods is the managing large amounts of data. I had approximately 500 hundred pages of transcribed interviews. Concurrently, because of the conversation style employed in the in-depth interview technique, the data was very unstructured, requiring the same amount of attention being to each word and line in the text.

Each interview ranged from 45 to 90 minutes in length depending on situational factors, for example prior commitments and family obligations. The interviews were open-ended and exploratory allowing the participant to play a key role in shaping and guiding of the interview (Patten, 1987). The interview questions were a guideline for the interview and did not fully structure the discussion, thereby, resulting in a semi-structured interview. The process was flexible to allow follow-up on what was said during the course of the interview. This enabled me to ask questions and clarify responses during the process. The purpose of the interviews was not to uncover pre-existing meanings but to support the respondent in developing their meanings throughout the course of the interview (Kvale, 1996). For this reason, the interview began with broad, generic questions related to sense of place and then shifted to a more focussed discussion of sense of place associated with Strathcona County and Sherwood Park (see Appendix A for interview questions).

b) Participant Sample

Although there are a number of diverse and competing interests in Strathcona County, the research concentrated on long- and short-term residents (short-term is defined as living in the area for five years or less). A temporal distinction was chosen because many sense of place studies report a correlation between length of residency and feelings of sense of place (Tuan, 1977, 1980; Relph, 1976). Also, a discussion of length of residency gives insight into people-place relationships and settlement patterns and changes in the area.

A modified snowball sample was implemented to obtain six participants from each group for a total of twelve interviews on this topic. An attempt was made to target three rural (outlying area) participants and three urban (Sherwood Park) participants from the long- and short-term residency categories (see Appendix B for more information about research participants). The primary criterion of eligibility was that the participant be a resident of Strathcona County. Participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in in-depth interviews. Initial contact was made over the telephone and then interviews scheduled. An opportunity to re-interview each person, if necessary, was built into the consent form signed upon beginning the interview process.

Under the hermeneutical approach, the researcher must be prepared to deepen his or her understanding in the course of the research (Smith, 1991). For this reason, I kept a personal journal throughout the course of the research. The journal was essential for note taking during the interview and for reflection after. The journal allowed me to reflect on the research process as it unfolded and allowed me to document my own interpretations of the research so that I could track how my perspectives changed as the research progressed. Biases about my own conceptions of sense of place, the qualitative process itself, and the fact that the information was eventually going to be formatted into a highly structured thesis "product", -- these ideas and others were reflected upon in the journal.

The journal was also a useful document that I could refer back to during the final analysis of the data. It was during the reflections that many ideas were born and thought-out. The journal was also useful because there were many important exchanges in the interview that happened after the tape recorder was turned off. For instance, 9 out of 12 respondents wanted to show me around either their house or their property. These informal tours of their personal space brought up discussions that did not necessarily end up on the transcriptions. The journal was used to collect the more informal aspects of the interview process. The journal also allowed me to chronicle my own sense of place and acted as a basis for the personal journey section of the thesis in the introduction and conclusion.

c) Ethical Considerations

Interpretation is oriented by the researcher's effort to come into the hermeneutic circle in an appropriate manner (Smith, 1993). An interview inquiry is a moral undertaking. Interview research involves the danger of "expertification" of meanings where the expert expropriates the meanings from the subject's lived world and reifies them into categories to express some more basic reality (Kvale, 1996). The personal nature of interview interaction affects the participant. The information that is revealed informs our understanding of the human experience of the lived world, but this process should not be taken for granted. Moral research behaviour requires "sensitivity to identify ethical issues and the feeling of responsibility to act appropriately in regard to such issues" (Eisner & Peshkin as cited in Kvale, 1996, p. 136).

The research was guided by the regulations set out by the General Faculties Council of the University of Alberta. A proposal was submitted to the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation of the University of Alberta. All research participants were treated in an ethical manner and participation was informed and voluntary (see Appendix C for the informed consent form). Each interview began with an overview of the topic to be studied and an outline of the objectives of the proposal. It was expressly stated that the participant was free to withdraw from the process at anytime during the course of the research. Furthermore, the data were kept strictly confidential. The participants' real names or any other identifiable information have not been revealed in the final thesis or throughout the duration of the project. The interview tapes and written documentation were kept under the researcher's supervision and will be destroyed following completion of the study.

E. Data Analysis

A postmodern approach in hermeneutics forgoes the search for true fixed meanings and emphasises descriptive nuances, differences, and paradoxes (Kvale, 1996). There is a change from a substantial to a relational concept of meaning. Therefore, meaning interpretation goes beyond a structuring of the manifest meanings of a text to a deeper and less definitive interpretation of the text (Kvale). For this reason, it is important to keep in mind that the interpretations presented in this thesis are the author's only. It is possible that anyone reading this data may have a different interpretation. Having said this, "control is a key issue for the analysis of large amounts of complex interview data" (Kvale, p. 201).

The reader of an interpretive qualitative study has to be able to "see" how the researcher came to the conclusions and must understand the context of the information being stated.

There are two approaches to control the interview analysis. These are the use of *multiple interpreters* and the *explication of procedures* (Kvale, 1996). I will employ the *explication of procedures* method. This interpretive analysis follows a specific pattern of logic and will be outlined below so the reader can understand the basis of this particular interpretation. The main point to be remembered with this type of research is not so much whether another perspective with respect to the data could be adopted, but whether a reader adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher can also see what the researcher saw (Giorgi, as cited in Kvale).

This analysis re-contextualises the statements within a broader frame of reference. An interpreter's presuppositions enter into the questions he or she poses to the material (Kvale, 1996). The broader frame of reference in this case is the author's academic background (reading, course work, conversations) and personal background (gender, race, class). I have endeavoured to go beyond what was said in the interviews to determine relationships of meaning not immediately apparent in the text. Initially, this requires a certain distance from what is said in order to recontextualize the concept.

In order to accomplish this, it was important to reflect of the primacy of the questions being asked of the text. Hermeneutical and post-modern modes of understanding allow for plurality of interpretation (Kvale, 1996). There are multiple questions that can be posed to the material, with different questions leading to different meanings of the material (Kvale).

A hermeneutic question is not only a matter of the question the reader poses to a text, but also of "openness to the questions with which the text confronts the reader" (Kvale, p. 211).

Qualitative data analysis involves structuring large and complex interview material into a communicable framework for the reader. Upon completion of the transcripts, the data was imported into the NUD*IST software analysis program. NUD*IST stands for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing. It is a computer package designed to aid users in handling unstructured data in qualitative analysis, by supporting processes of coding data in an Index system, searching text or patterns of coding, and theorizing about the data (QSR NUD*IST, 1997). The three main uses of NUD*IST are managing documents, creating ideas and managing categories, and asking questions and building and testing theories about the data.

The next part of the analysis consisted of clarifying the material, eliminating repetition and extraneous information. This was probably the most time-consuming part of the process as it was important to guard against the deletion of important data. This step was vital to discern what was essential to answer the research question (Kvale, 1996).

a) Methods of Data Analysis

The analysis "proper involved developing the meanings of the interview, bringing the respondent's own understanding into light, as well as providing new perspective from the researcher on the phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 190). The five main approaches to the analysis of meaning are condensation, categorisation, narrative structuring, interpretation, and ad hoc methods (Kvale). In this study I have employed the interpretive method.

The analysis can be done in a variety of ways according to Miles and Huberman (1994). The following steps represent the process of analysis used in this study.

- **Note patterns and themes**

  This part of the analysis was on-going and began after completion of the first interview. Re-visiting the interviews through the transcripts and tapes was vital to get a sense of the respondents and to identify themes as they emerged.
  At this time, I was going back to the literature to situate myself with the findings of other sense of place studies. I also began reading more about community, family life, and childhood experiences of space.

- **Clustering**

  The clustering started to take place when approximately half of the interviews were completed. At that time it was apparent that common themes had emerged. In order to begin to cluster the themes I did three things.

  - Word document creation
    - I created word documents around certain themes. I cut and pasted interview quotes into corresponding word documents and then made notes under each quote.

- Poster Creation
    - I created a poster for each theme then cut up the interviews and placed quotes under the corresponding poster heading. This proved invaluable as it gave a visual of the "large picture".
- NUD*IST Qualitative Analysis
    - NUD*IST software allows the researcher to implement data (interview transcripts) and organize information effectively and efficiently. I employed NUD*IST only to organize the data. Although this is a great organisational tool, it is still up to the researcher to tell the software what to look for. If the objectives of the study were more comprehensive and involved, NUD*IST would have been a good tool to keep asking questions of the data.

- **Articulating contrasts and comparisons**

This tool was pivotal in working with the data. I began to discover that people often talk about their sense of place in opposition to something else. For instance, it was easier to explain a complex concept by discussing what it was not. I will return to this point later to show how this is important in the way knowledge about something is constructed. However, for the purpose of this section, the comparisons and contrasts between the interviews made it possible to organize around particular frameworks that will be discussed later on.

- **Subsuming particulars under the general**

This tool was used most effectively when organizing sub-frameworks under the general broad-based frameworks. This was employed in the Word document creation and poster creation (Figure 3.5). See example on the following page:

Poster # 2: Urban and Rural Space

Rural	Urban
Suburb	City
Periphery	Centre
Safety	Danger
Inclusion	Exclusion
Same	Different

Figure 3.5: An example of the poster created for the emergent theme entitled Urban and Rural Space

- **Making conceptual theoretical coherence**

This step involved going back to the literature to review the reading that served as a basis for the study. It also meant finding new literature to shed light on my findings. It was then a matter of checking my own biases against the data. It was a very circular process of data analysis in order to determine theoretical coherence.

b) Binary Oppositions

The framework for the analysis in this section is based on binaries and oppositions. Almost all respondents talked about their sense of place in relation to something that they considered to be opposite to it. For instance, in talking about characteristics of the suburbs, most respondents would relate these areas to the city or to the country. This led to thinking about other oppositions apparent in the material, such as private and public space, rural and urban, long- and short-term residency, and local and non-local leisure.

Reason	Passion
White	Black
Science	Art
Male	Female
Nature	Culture

Figure 3.6: Examples of binary oppositions.

Set in opposition to each other, these binaries are mutually exclusive categories such that given examples belong to one category or another, but not to both. The principle of binary opposition depends on a notion of a fixed identity. Identity, however, is a fluid concept as the data in this study reflects (Figure 3.6). The left side of the binary reflects Enlightenment thinking and has structured much of the way that we look at the world and structure institutional and social relations. Therefore, the qualities on the left side of the binary have been privileged over the qualities on the right. Binary oppositions reflect a structuralist approach and are based on essentialist principles. It is this aspect of structuralism that is most vigorously attacked by postmodernists. For example, the binary between "insideness" and "outsideness" is contentious for postmodernists. It is unclear where the inside ends and the outside begins. It is argued that what is inside and outside are one thing and can not be separated into two separate entities. Derrida (1976) utilised this notion first, to undermine the tropes of representation known as the Enlightenment project or modernism. Derrida applied structuralist modes of analysis to find an underlying system of relationships, the structure within which any individual event could have a meaning.

The use of binary oppositions undertakes to de-centre the privileged sites of the dominant discourse. This led Derrida to examine other binary couplets. He found that the privileging of one term over the other led to the preference of one term working at the expense or exclusion of the other. Deconstruction as Derrida (1976) explains is a way to expose, reverse, and dismantle binary oppositions with their hierarchies of value. That is to render the untenable logic which, while pitching one term against the other, fails to recognise that each term differs from and defers to the other term. This means that even though "good" is distinct from evil, as the privileged term, good also depends for its meaning on association with its subordinate opposite evil. This suggests a degree of negation between opposite terms, each becoming a "trace" of the other, but also indicates the impossibility of ever maintaining a clear-cut division in the form of an opposite. Among other things, this blurs the binary and opens up a host of questions to the way we organize things in society. It also points to the unstable nature of meaning. Through deconstruction Derrida seeks to overcome this. To overcome this difference is to subsume two opposing terms into one fusion.

Sense of place is a term that has been positioned on the "nature" side of the binary. It represented the unexplainable, the unknown, and the mystical. A useful way to understand this phenomena is to organize it according to the principles of the Enlightenment, namely truth, rationality, and science. That which is clear, reasonable, and proven is easier to understand than that which is unknown, unexplainable, and mystical. Debunking or deconstructing the myth of the binary and the way that we view our sense of place is one way to examine the notions that the myth is built upon. Myths perpetuate ideas that the world is organized in very specific ways, privileging some ways of knowing over others.

In the literature, sense of place is presented as a concept that connotes emotionality, symbolism, spirituality and the like. It is expressed as being the direct opposite of science and scientific thinking. If understood in the traditional positivistic way, the result is an essentialist, reductionist, and linear understanding of sense of place. It is "easier" to categorize the socio-cultural understandings of landscape and place on the side of the "unknown". It automatically closes the discussion of experience in space and negotiation of space. If human interaction in place is only understood as a material and physical expression in space or as an emotional reaction to space, the discussion of sense of place is limited. However, if the relationship between people and place is put into questions and traditional notions of place are disrupted, sense of place can serve as a useful tool for discussing social relations in space.

During the data analysis stage, it became apparent that people often spoke of their lived experiences in place in opposition to something else. For instance, the city is dangerous, but suburbs, such as Sherwood Park, are safe. However, the emergent thematic information that was most interesting was that although people talk about places that they feel are important in very distinct and often polarized ways, many of these ideas may be based on almost mythic beliefs. Therefore hierarchies associated with certain themes were disrupted and "untruths" exposed. Instead of viewing concepts of place as polarized and separate entities, I have placed them on a continuum. In most cases, the information speaks for itself; however, in some cases new literature has been utilised to explain concepts more fully. Sense of place is a very fluid and dynamic concept. It evolves and changes over the life span and is relative to socio-demographic factors, such as class, gender, sexuality, and race. For this reason, the data is presented in an open dialogue format to discuss place and space in different ways.

Figure 3.6 represents the framework for the interpretive process used in this thesis. The chapters of the thesis are organized according to the following framework based on emergent themes uncovered in the data analysis section of the thesis. Each chapter is organized around one binary opposition and then is broken down further based on the identified subcategories. Chapter four details the relationship between public and private spaces. This discussion includes an interpretive analysis of the interview data focusing on individual and social spaces, specifically places such as homes, schools, churches, and communities. Chapter five focuses on the opposition of rural and urban space. This discussion includes issues of danger and safety in places, inclusive and exclusive places, and sameness and difference found in place. Chapter six examines urban and rural spaces, looking specifically at rootedness and newness, nostalgia and modernity, and adult and child relationships with place. Chapter seven explores local and non-local leisure.

Binary Opposition Framework for chapter organisation	**Corresponding Sub-categories within each binary**
Chapter 4: Private and Public Space	• Individual and Personal Spaces • Social and Cultural Spaces • Community Spaces
Chapter 5: Rural and Urban Space	• Small Town Ideology • Urban/City Ideology • Suburban Ideology
Chapter 6: Long- and Short-term Residency	• Rootedness vs. Newness • Tradition vs. Modernity • Adult vs. Child
Chapter 7: Local and Non-Local Leisure	• Local Leisure • Non-local Leisure

Figure 3.7: Chapter headings and binary oppositions categories and sub-categories.

Chapter Three presented a comprehensive overview of the methodological approach employed in the study of how residents of Strathcona County articulate their sense of place in relation to their community. The chapter began with a brief discussion of Strathcona County and relevant information regarding the nature of the community was presented in order to contextualize the study. Following the overview of the study area, a brief explanation of the theoretical approach towards qualitative methodology was provided. Qualitative methodology was discussed by explaining the hermeneutical approach and semi-structured in-depth interviews used in the study. Subject selection ethical considerations were discussed emphasising the voluntary nature of the study and respondent willingness to participate in the study. A discussion of the process of data analysis was then presented to demonstrate the rigor and depth associated with the interpretive paradigm. The binary opposition framework used to analyse emergent themes was defined and explained encapsulating the discussion of methodology, methods, and data analysis. Finally, an outline for the subsequent thesis chapters was presented to guide the reader through the emergent themes in the discussion portion of the thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPACE

A. An Introduction to Private and Public Space

Places are geographical spaces, mental constructs, and imaginary extensions of lived experiences. They are real and concrete but also dream-like and imaginary. However, the real and the imagined present a binary opposition and reflect a way of thinking that is perhaps too structured, not accounting for many different ways of negotiating the spatial world. Space is either seen as a concrete material form to be mapped, analysed, and explained; or as a mental construct or idea about and representative of space and its social significance (Soja, 1996). As this thesis has evolved to consider the dualism present in thinking about space, this opposition will be called into question as well, to determine if space can be thought of in a way that is not bounded by the structure of "in" and "out." For this reason, the discussion section of the thesis begins with an analysis of the binary opposition of private and public space. A discussion of private space, such as the home, will be presented followed by an examination of social and cultural spaces. The binary is disrupted through a close examination of how residents of Strathcona County articulate their views of sense of place in relation to private and public spaces.

B. Personal and Individual Spaces

The data analysis and discussion section begins with an exploration of the individual and personal places--the places where people feel they have a sense of well-being, comfort, and perhaps a greater sense of themselves. Sense of place was often talked about as something intensely personal and localized. This necessarily reflects the private notions of sense of place. Sense of place can be "owned" and a certain degree of comfort can be taken in such profoundly intimate connections with places. It can be a personal place that is removed from the rest of the world, one where there is solace and freedom in "being in your own world." One respondent's discussion of his or her sense of place being in his or her "head" is an example of this.

> I think of sense of place as feeling comfortable in my head. When I run and roller blade, if I feel tense, I like to be in a wide-open area and doing something where I can lose myself. I get a sense of place within myself, within my mind.

The following respondent discussed his recliner has being his place. It is where he can lose himself and feel a sense of belonging at the same time. Although a very localized place, this important place gives the respondent a sense of well-being and comfort.

> My sense of place is in my recliner. It is basically a sports chair. I'm in a different world when I'm watching a football game like in a selfish way. Recliner's feet up for the night... But if I think of recliner I automatically think of sports; it is my place. It was the first piece of furniture we bought before anything else. Recliner, TV, and VCR.

From a very localized version of sense of place we move into a discussion of sense of place being a feeling associated with safety and comfort. It is a place where you can be who you are without fear or judgement. The themes of belonging and feeling secure emerged from the data and are important indicators of feeling a sense of place in space. The following quotation reveals how profoundly these ideas influence concepts of self.

> Sense of place is where you belong. I think it is where you feel safe and most comfortable. It is a place where you fit in, where you belong, where you feel comfortable. Because all those things are contributing factors to someone being successful in all aspects of their life.

Sense of place is a feeling that is not just connected to wide-open places. It can be felt in the smallest of places and the most interior places. A feeling of sense of place can occur in very localized physical places, for instance, in a chair or at a particular sitting area. It is intensely personal and intimate and very much connected to a sense of having a personal place, a place where you can go to get "lost".

a) Home

One of the places most often mentioned in terms of embodying a sense of place was the home. In many cases the home connotes feelings of belonging and represents a place where you can be who you really are. The space, both physically and socially, is comfortable and safe for many of the respondents. It is also a space that is organized to reflect what is desired and the attitudes that are associated with the "idea" of home. Home, therefore, is a physical place, but it is also an idea and conceptualisation of what a home should be. The idea of home has evolved to become an important place is our collective understanding of lived experience.

> My sense of place is the home and I need a home. It's very important to have a home and a place to retreat. The home is a safe place. And, hopefully a happy place.

The above quotations reveal the power of the home place in defining important spaces. In the interviews, home was most often associated with a sense of place and identity. As Sarup (1994) says, "we are where we come from; it is part of the story we tell of ourselves" (p. 93). For many of the respondents, home embodied pleasant memories, intimate situations, security, love, comfort, relaxation, privacy, and warmth. As such, a more thorough discussion of home is necessary to explore the ways in which a home is transformed from a space to an important place that influences both individual and group senses of place.

> "Home is what you associate your memories with."

The above respondent statement demonstrates the possibility of home becoming an important place through interaction. A considerable amount of time is spent in the home, and it is a site of important life experiences. As time passes, the site becomes entrenched in our understanding of place and intimately tied to experience. Tuan (1977) discusses home as a place that is known through extensive use. It becomes part of a collective identity, so much so that it is difficult to be reflective of its importance. It is so much a part of daily life in place, so close to us, that it is difficult to separate from the lived experience in place. The house, as a physical structure, does not comprehensively constitute the idea of home. Home is more than a geographical location. It is realised through all the senses and becomes tangible and concrete through meanings acquired over time that, in turn, become memories. The home is a "place where every day is multiplied by all the days before it" (Tuan, 1977, p. 144).

> I think of home when I think of sense of place because I had a good home life growing up. I think you're comfortable there and relaxed there and you can think there and do whatever you want. It is not necessarily the house, but just my home. You feel accepted and "known" because if you're comfortable with people around you and where you're at, then you can be yourself too. And then when you have your own home, you want it to emit the same feelings of comfort.

The above quotation shows the way in which the respondent articulates the importance of a home place. However, it is important to realise that in the beginning of the statement, the respondent qualified the response by saying, "I had a good home life." In many ways the definition of a good home life is contentious and different for everyone. Clearly, however, a "good home life" can impact sense of place profoundly.

Also, it should be noted that home and positive feelings of sense of place are not universal. In many ways that home can connote negative senses of place and can disrupt commonly held notions of sense of place as only a positive relationship to place. The following attempts to discuss the impact of a negative home environment.

> I have a hard time going to the house I grew up in. I never drive by it, like some people drive by the houses that they grew up in. When I think of that house, I feel a pit in my stomach. Too many memories and stuff there. I know that it is a place where I did not feel at peace. I would associate a feeling of anxiousness to that place.

This statement highlights the notion that sense of place is not a static entity unto itself, but rather a contentious and variable term and concept. The ambiguity of the term can be explored more fully by examining the home as a place of identity and roots. The home acts as grounding place for many people and, whether positive or negative, it is pervasive and influential.

Home is usually identified with the idea of roots. Like trees, when we are young we are planted in a place and life experiences start to grow out of us, and those experiences, "root" us into the place. People search for their roots for a renewed pride in identity and identification with home or a homeland (Sarup, 1994). Roots are located in a certain place and give information about culture, history, ancestry, family, and tradition. However, it is arguable that these roots are not concrete or static. Culture, history, and tradition, although grounded in reality, are fluid and always changing. They are symbols of identity that are assigned value through interaction and experience. The paradox regarding symbols and meanings is that thinking about them creates distance and destroys the immediacy of the direct experience. Yet, it is by thoughtful reflection that the illusive moments of the past draw near to us in present reality and gain a measure of significance and meaning (Tuan, 1977).

> Sense of place to me means belonging. Where you belong is pretty much where you hang your hat. Like this is my home, but it's also just a house. And it's what I make out of it and what I need most out of it, that makes it my home. It has to be what I make it out to be, not what other people think it should be.

Many respondents reported that home represents a sense of place because it is a private place, a place where a degree of ownership and control allows a person to make the space what he or she wants it to be. As this theme began to emerge from the data, a relationship between private space and personal places became apparent. In contrast, public places were not reported as being important to an individual's personal sense of place; this led to an exploration into the development of a more private conception of space. In fact, the organisation of home over the centuries has reflected a transition from collective and more public living spaces to the development of private home places. Homes used to serve as public places before there were public places such as restaurants, hotels, pubs, and corner stores. As recently as 300 years ago, life was inherently more public, due to lack of personal ownership and technological limitations. People shared living, eating, sleeping, play, and workspaces. Over time, there has been a deeper awareness of self and the internal world of the individual and the family as a private preserve. This coincided with the development of the house as a setting for interior life. For the bourgeois class specifically, the home became a residence and people began to work outside the home in traditional professional occupations. For example, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and bookkeepers tended to work outside of the home in office spaces.

The house evolved to become a more private place. Along with the privatization of the home, a growing sense of intimacy arose. Before the idea of the "home as the seat of family life could enter into the human consciousness, it required the experience of both privacy and intimacy, neither of which had been possible in earlier times" (Rybczynski, 1986, p. 48). Furthermore, the presence of children in private households signified a separation of the family from others, and in turn reflected the growing self-awareness of the family as a social unit, contributing to the idea of home as a place for family.

Homeiness does not mean neatness. Homeiness connotes having things around you that are personal and special to you as a person (Rybczynski, 1986). Sterility of the home environment does not connote feelings of comfort or give the place the "lived in" quality. Human occupation is necessary to give the house that feeling of home. When describing this, many things come to mind about the homes of the people interviewed for the study. For instance, in one home, chairs were placed by the window to facilitate bird watching. This floor plan did not coincide with the seemingly normal way to organize living spaces. Some homes had newspapers strewn on living room floors or unwashed dinner dishes on the counter. In some cases living spaces were being renovated and this brought up conversations about what they were trying to achieve in their interior decorating or the visions they had for their living spaces. It was evident that people wanted to explain how they came to know what they wanted in a house and home. Some respondents attempted to incorporate elements of old homes or childhood homes. Sometimes there was a need to incorporate elements from a vacation destination – for instance, one respondent had a collection of African masks displayed on their mantel to signify memories from a family vacation. The home is symbolic of the people living there, both in a real and imaginary sense. It is organized to reflect personal taste and experience and becomes comfortable and relaxing over time. The following quotations from two respondents detail how home becomes an important place in lived experience.

> I feel a sense of place in my home. I feel comfortable and safe. The things there are mine and I cherish them. It's my stuff; it's my living room. It is the place where I relax, sit, drink my port, and listen to my blues. Everything feels right there. No one can get at me.

> I like to put everything in line-- everything into its own little place cause I have a lot of things going, and I need everything in order. I guess I'm pretty sequential and logical. I have to unwind – because my job is high pressure-- I need the ability to push it away, you know what I mean, because there's lots of room to push it away. Lots of space, and it is my private space.

When people discuss home they talk about comfort and well being. The data showed this in almost every case. Rybczynski (1986) asks the question what is the meaning of comfort? The word comfortable is derived from the Latin *confortare*, meaning to strengthen or console. Comfort, associated with home in the physical sense, was not fully realised until the eighteenth century with improvements and advancements in technology, namely heating and water supplies. Comfort was meant to be "undramatic and calming" (Rybczynski, 1986, p. 121). It was to appear natural, but in effect was highly contrived. Rybczynski comments, "domestic well being is a fundamental human need, that is deeply rooted in us, and that must be satisfied" (p. 217). This statement accounts for the overwhelming number of respondents who indicated that home should be a place of comfort and well-being. The home and qualities of the house are indeed important in people's daily lives, but also in memories and reflections, of what the "idea of home" is. Rybczynski comments that people recognise comfort when they experience it. Recognising comfort involves a combination of sensations, many of them subconscious but also emotional as well as intellectual.

Over time the word has evolved to be connoted with a level of domesticity. Domesticity means belonging to the home or family. This also coincided with the home as a more feminine place. A female respondent concurs with this statement as she feels her sense of place is intimately tied to the kitchen in her home: "My kitchen. Home is the kitchen." The kitchen as embodying a sense of place was particularly evident when discussing homes with the older female respondents. It was less common in discussions with younger women living in urban environments. This could be evidence of another shift in how ideas of the home are conceptualised. To speak of domesticity is to "describe a set of felt emotions, not a single attribute" (Rybczynski, 1986, p. 75). Domesticity encompasses family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as a sense of the house as embodying, not only harbouring, these sentiments. The idea of "homey" domesticity depended on the development of a rich interior awareness, an awareness that was the result of the woman's role in the home. This began most notably in the notion that the home was intended to be clean and well cared for. As home care was the primary role of women, domestic activities not only gave the home a feeling of humanness but also a feeling of femininity. Cooking and cleaning exemplified human interaction with the space and resulted in artefacts that gave space meaningfulness. Examples of this are the hearth, cooking pots hanging on the wall and furniture that was used to both sit and sleep on. It was the wife, not her husband, who insisted on cleanliness and tidiness, not the least because it was she who had to do the work (Rybczynski, 1986). The home became a feminine place, or at least was coming under feminine control. This led to domesticity of the home and the idea that home and the house had a meaning in and of itself connected to the feminine realm.

Home takes on other meanings connoting household, dwelling, refuge, and ownership. There comes with it the idea of taking care of your environment. Home means the house but also all that is in it and around it. It includes the people and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these things convey (Rybczynski, 1986). Over time, particularly with the advent of more convenient technological devices to aid in the home, the idea of the household began to change, both physically and emotionally.

The home came to represent a reflection of personal taste and style; a place to inscribe individual and collective identity. The following quotation from a respondent discusses the care and detail taken to make his house a "home".

> We designed this house ourselves. We put in the things that we could afford when we built this house. I had a friend of mine draw up the plans. This, this was the family room right here. And the living room used to be over there. We added a fireplace that we couldn't afford originally; got a new window and another entry back there. As time passed we added a sunken living room. I can't think in terms of spaces in my head. So, at night I would go outside with my tape measure and my flashlight. I spent the entire night actually until morning, running around the back of the house with my tape measure working things out and finally came to the conclusion that we could do it. That room by the way, well you were probably in it for only a few seconds, but it has the best vibes in the entire country. It's the most comfortable room you're ever going to be in. I designed the fireplace. And, we worked it out so that the fireplace looks out on to where my mother's spinning wheel is.

Home is place where one actually lives, but it is also a place that is thought of as being "home." The idea of home connotes domesticity and family. It is close and personal, yet penetrating and pointed in its feel and meaning and its lasting significance. The idea of home is private and personal, not discussed, because it is intimate, shared with only a select few. As an ideal, it is a stable place. In many cases, it is the centre of one's life. Home becomes bound in a routine set of practices, in repetition of habitual interactions, in a regularly used personal space. One comes to be at home in interactional routines, routines that are fixed and regular. It is a space that is like a story and picture in one's head, in words, jokes, opinions, gestures, and actions (Rapport, 1995). The resident personalizes a stereotyped discourse and puts it into practice. It is a way of interpreting the context of everyday life and making it our own. The following quotation from a respondent discusses how a home, quirks and all, becomes a happy and comfortable place.

> My sense of place is where you're sitting. Home, I would say. We have talked about moving, but really why would we want to move? We have everything that makes us happy here. We know what's wrong with our house. You buy a house, and you sort of gradually find out what's wrong with it.

Rapport (1995) says that that idea of home must undergo a change. The conception somehow has to move from the traditional concept of a stable physical centre to a far more mobile conception. In today's fast-paced and changing worlds it may be difficult to regard home as a physical location that is consistent and regular. It is questionable whether the home is the same stable place in an increasingly global society.

Arguably, home may not carry the same connotations of familiar social order that is stable and secure (Rapport).

Most of the literature in human geography focuses on public space, shying away from domestic interiors because they are too personal and private. Therefore, it is difficult to explore the ways that places can become sites of frustration and anxiety. The dominant message is that the private domain of the home is benign, controllable, and personal space in contrast to the exterior, public domain that is uncontrollable and uncertain. There is in North America a long history of the development of the house as a place of safety from both non-human and human threats, a history that culminates in guaranteeing the house, a "man's" castle, against unreasonable seizure. The house becomes a place of maximum exercise of individual autonomy, minimum conformity to the formal and complex rules of public demeanour. The house acquires a sacred character from its complex intertwining with the self and from the symbolic character it has as a representation of the family.

C. Social and Cultural Spaces

People in place is necessarily a component of belonging in place. This is played out in the data in a variety of ways. The social component of sense of place has been identified in the literature as being important, but the places that people talk about are important indicators of their relationships to place. This is where the place, in a sense, takes on a feeling of its own and becomes an entity that is described as having a "sense" to it. It is something that is as much a physical space as it is an imaginary place that people agree has some importance beyond the individual in the place or the physicality of the space. The places that respondents associate with the social aspect of sense of place are intricately tied to people's experience of place. The data reflects the discussion of both real and imagined places. For instance, the discussions of family and the football locker room that follow in the next section are based on the physical place of the house and the locker room, but it is the construction of those places in the minds of the collective group of individuals that gives the place the quality of having sense of place. Family was a term used over and over to describe special places. As the literature reflects, important social relationships profoundly influence feelings toward place. It is not surprising that intense social relationships, such as those often found in the family unit, would have such an impact on places. In childhood, self is bound by others and by physical locations be they home, community, or neighbourhoods. Home is a place where children are subject to numerous controls by adults over the use of space and time. This behaviour is learned and then spills over into public space. This is seen most evidently in the home environment and the interaction of family.

> Sense of place is family for sure. I guess that's the one thing I always think of that is important. Family goes through the bad and the good. You go through your whole life essentially, you're growing up with your brothers. Especially now that I'm married and going to have a kid you understand what your parents had to go through, what sacrifices had to be made, sacrifices had to made for you to learn properly. Family's more, there's more depth to it now. That's probably one of the most meaningful places for me, is with my family, wherever we are, as long as we are together.

However, the interview data also reflect the impact of family relationships on other places as well. The following passage is from a young man recounting an important vacation he took with his family after the death of a family member.

> After my grandmother died my family went on a trip. It was a way to release the stress afterwards. I went to Las Vegas with my parents and my sister. It was really cool and we were having such a great time. It was a new thing for us because I was always close to my parents but I was never close to my sister. And I think that was the turning point for us. Now we're very close. That is why the vacation was so great. It wasn't really the place, cause the place was exciting, it's an exciting place to go. But, just getting away, putting that part of our life behind us, and getting closer to the family, is what I really liked about the trip. It was only four days. But it was good.

Having said that, family, as we know, is intensely personal and does not always coincide with happy memories. However, when recounting intensely personal experience in life, it is the place – the smell, sights, sounds, and activities – that often will trigger the most intense memories.

> My sense of place changed when I turned fifteen. My parents divorced. There was six years between myself and the youngest one. I'd do the big brother thing and I'd look after the little brother.

> My father wasn't around so I started to do the things a father would. When I turned sixteen I would take my little brother to hockey. I even had to go up ladders and do things I was scared to do. I'm terrified of heights, but someone had to put up Christmas lights because we thought that's what we had to do for my mother. I think that was the first time that I went for a walk afterwards to be by myself because I was shaking the whole time and I needed to get out of there. I had to do it for my family and I protect not only myself but I protect my family. One way to protect yourself is to build up a wall so that you have your own space inside where you can go to be by yourself.

Regardless of the nature of the relationships, the family unit is particularly apparent in discussing important places. Whether family is near or far, the memories of the shared family space have lasting implications and impacts our understanding of places in profound ways.

a) Community Spaces

Most of the time people are not conscious of their community perspective, but these frameworks, though taken for granted, shape an understanding of community experience and influence action toward communities (Hummon, 1990). Communities are constructed based on a shared understanding or idea of what that community "is" or "should be". Communities are used and participated in by individuals, yet the perspective of community is profoundly public; it is learned, shared, and sustained through communication with others. Hummon calls this idea the cultural context of community ideologies. Community ideologies are systems of belief that legitimate the social and psychological interest of community residents through their presentation of community life and people. This is accomplished through the function of symbolism. Hummon (1990) identifies how the symbolism functions to determine community ideology:

- by categorizing, characterizing, and explaining reality in ways that produce and legitimate commitment to a form of community,
- in adopting the beliefs, values, and assumptions, individuals construct a perspective that makes their community the locus of the good life or a shared way of thinking that their community is "the best place to live."

Community ideologies, on a more pragmatic level, use conceptions of community to describe, evaluate, and explain a social reality, and do so in a manner so as to motivate commitment to a community. This happens to specific communities, but also can be seen in the way that people construct images of community on a broader level. The ways in which the term community is defined influences the particular form of community that is deemed good or that is valued by a society. Social and community places--namely, the church, school, and neighbourhood--have a profound effect on sense of place. The respondents claimed those places were important in terms of the transition from childhood to adulthood. They were places of growth and discovery, intensely personal but also public spaces.

> I went to a Christian college; school was an important place where friendships were formed. We all had our religion and church in common. Our parents taught us the same things, even morally. We didn't all follow our teachings because we got there and you're away from your parents for the first time. It was a place to decide what you're going to believe in and to choose a path. As friends we were honest with each other. College seemed like a place to talk about stuff and find yourself.

As the previous quotation suggests, schools, the ways they are organized and what they represent, be it friends, education, sporting teams, or clubs, affect feelings of belonging, or conversely, not belonging to a place. The following quotation from a respondent explains how schools factor in as important places in creating and fostering individual and collective senses of place.

> As a student, it was just the fact that we believed that because we went to this school, we were just a little bit better. If you play for the top five every year, ranked football school, you know there's a prestige there, a tradition you're representing, more than just yourself. You're representing everybody that ever went there. You went to school there, you liked it so much, that you wanted to continue the tradition that you learned when you were there.

> But I just think it was a great place because the school spirit was phenomenal, and you were proud even if you weren't on the teams you still had the sweatshirt and were proud of the place.

Schools are often places associated with a sense of place, even if those feelings are not necessarily fondly remembered. This is primarily because they are contentious environments, depending on life stage, and can also be awkward and painful environments for some people. Furthermore, school environments can be exclusionary places, acting as the grounding place to decide who is "in" and who is "out". Regardless, there are distinct memories associated with being at school. Whether the experience was positive or negative, respondents claim they still had a sense of place.

> As a place (school) I just remember being a chubby freckle face with zits walking in there. I really didn't fit in very well. And I remember coming out almost a man. Some of the other guys were a lot more successful at school, but for me I understood what a great place it was because you didn't have to worry about being bullied by a gang, you just walked in. It is where I met my friends. My life-long friends, not just a bunch of goofs that you hang out with in high school. It was important because it was the place where we all met and started forming our friendships. For me, that was the big thing, cause we all went and did our own things, but we all came back.

> That school is almost like home base for us, that's why we go back there every year as a group of friends and hang out.

Football came up a number of times in a few different interviews. This could be a coincidence, but Sherwood Park is known to be a very active sporting community, taking a lot of pride in performance and the quality of their sporting teams and facilities. Fields, arenas, and sport complexes dot the landscape. Many children and teenagers have had access to sporting opportunities in Sherwood Park and, more widely, the vast area of Strathcona County. Football is an interesting sport in particular as it appears to be associated with many important places tied to adolescent and youth experience.

> When I think of team I think of football, I think it's different from most sports because you have eighty guys on the team and you all have to work together. Well, there may be only eleven or twelve out on the field at a time, but it's like if one piece of the link is out it affects everything. So as far as a team goes, I think football players are more loyal to the idea of team. More so than a track and field or volleyball or something like that. You're forced to work hard and you're forced to co-operate. You're forced to blend with different personalities and coaching styles. I think I'm on this team and I've accomplished something. It's not like I just made this team, I wasn't cut, they thought I was good enough to be on this team, and now you have all these people around you as your friends, almost family, and they think you are OK. It's just kind of

> something to look forward to, and when I look back now at college the first thing I think of is team. All the stuff you went through, all the off-season workouts at six in the morning, all the weightlifting, all the fund-raisers, everything. When you initially think of the word team you think of a bunch of guys or girls on a team but it's a lot deeper than that.

These important football places range from the favourite spectator chair (recall the arm-chair quarter back) to the fields, to the "infamous" locker room. These are spaces that are remembered for the elements of team. Recalling their football experiences, respondents likened the football field to a battle zone and expressed the need to protect their fellow players:

> I think in terms of football as a family. When you play it, you're always taught that it's like going to war. And you have to do your job, cause if you don't, it could hurt the guy next to you or behind you.

The following discussion of the football team as having qualities associated with family, delineates the space of football has having importance to feelings of identity in a community. The idea of team solidarity gives people the feelings of well-being and belonging commonly associated with sense of place. However, the spaces of the football team are contested and exclusionary. For instance, not everyone can participate on a football team and, therefore, not everyone has access to the intimate spaces that football players occupy. Regardless, for those who do participate, football spaces are important and influential. They necessarily require a fitting in of sorts and a buying in to the idea of what it is to be a football player. Most of the men interviewed in the study mentioned locker room space as a being a place where they had a sense of place. Belonging to a team, and then having those corresponding spaces, was important.

> And you know where I really got a sense of football as a family, was two weeks ago I substitute taught at my old school and the room I was in had a yearbook. You could tell every single football player that graduated cause there was a comment about something that happened on the field or in the locker room.

The football locker room was mentioned in all of the interviews with the football players. It is that kind of space where different kinds of behaviour are accepted; the phrase "anything goes" comes to mind. The following passage highlights the freedom of the locker room as a place to let loose, relax, and be yourself.

> Guys that I played football with when I was thirteen, fourteen years old, and I see them and we talk about what happened in the locker room. And really it's nothing, we were fourteen years old. It's all the stuff that goes on in the locker room. In the locker room anything goes. Any story goes, guys listen. It is where you be who you want to be. For some people it takes about sixty years before they let out who they are. But in the locker room anything goes. The coolest place to be is in the locker room after a game. You sit around and half-hour's gone by and guys still have their stuff on

> and drinking their fifth beer. I don't know how to describe it. You let everything out – it is open and fun. It is free. I mean it has got to be the best place in sports.

D. Summary Discussion

Space is either seen as a concrete material form to be mapped, analysed, and explained; or as a mental construct or idea about space and its social significance (Soja, 1996). This opposition was called into question to determine if space can be thought of in a way that is not bounded by the structure of "in" and "out." This discussion began with an analysis of the binary opposition of private and public space. A discussion of private space, such as the home, was followed by an examination of social and cultural spaces, whether positive or negative.

The chapter emphasised a number of elements of sense of place not usually mentioned in the literature. Firstly, there is an immense range of physical places that can be associated with a sense of place. One respondent mentioned feeling a sense of place in relation to his recliner. Although a very localized place, this important place gives the respondent a sense of well-being and comfort. Sense of place is a feeling that is not just connected to wide-open places. It can be felt in the smallest of places and the most interior places. It is a place that he could not do without; an experience fundamental to understanding his own needs for relaxation and comfort. Likewise, another respondent brought up the idea of a sense of place being inside the head, almost akin to losing yourself in your body. Implied within this, is the notion that positive feelings of sense of place are an integral to identity and how we see ourselves in relation to other people and places. It is a place where you can be who you are without fear or judgement. The themes of belonging and feeling secure emerged from the data and are important indicators of feeling a sense of place in space. Conversely, negative feelings of sense of place can profoundly affect feelings of belonging and safety. On a psychological level alone, it is evident that experiences of place strongly contribute to individual and collective identity, maybe as much as other psychological constructs such self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-concept.

One of the places most often mentioned, as eliciting strong feelings of sense of place was the home. In many cases the home connotes feelings of belonging and represents a place where you can be who you really are. The space, both physically and socially, is comfortable and safe for many of the respondents. However, more research needs to be conducted into how people interact with these intensely personal and intimate spaces. Arguably, the idea of home as a private reserve has impacted the type of research that has been conducted to give insight into spatial theory and practice. Perhaps the home is too private a place to conduct such personal research inquiries. However, it may be another avenue to further explore how people interact in larger spaces. Furthermore, gender structures the home environment in very specific ways. The home is a feminine place, a place that women are both in control of and constrained by. Further examination into the ways in which gender structures important and meaningful places would give additional insight into people and place relationships.

Communities are constructed based on a shared understanding or idea of what that community "is" or "should be". Communities are used and participated in by individuals, yet the perspective of community is profoundly public. It is learned, shared, and sustained through communication with others. Shared community ideologies have a profound effect on the way that places are conceptualised by the people living there. By examining community ideologies, new ways of discussing place and sense of place are exposed. The selected residents of Strathcona County, interviewed for this study, believe in these ideologies and the ideologies are sustained through the shared conceptions of their community in relation to other communities. However, although believing in shared ideologies can contribute to feelings of community solidarity and togetherness, these ideologies are often based on myths of what that particular community should be. For instance, according to the respondents, safety issues are of paramount concern in communities like Strathcona County and perceptions of safety necessarily effect positive feelings of sense of place. Perceptions of safety in Strathcona County are based on shared community ideologies. However, Strathcona County is increasingly reflecting an urban landscape and will undoubtedly struggle to keep the small town "feel". This apparent contradiction in thinking about space raises questions as to how "real" and "imagined" perceptions of safety impact feelings of sense of place. Further research into the ways that shared community ideologies structure spatial relations would shed light onto feelings of sense of place in social contexts.

Through a close examination of how residents of Strathcona County articulate their views of sense of place in relation to private and public spaces, insight was given into the ways in which people structure individual, social, and cultural place relationships in the private and public spheres. The binary opposition framework allows for a deeper conceptualisation of sense of place not yet uncovered in current sense of place research.

It opens up dialogue focussing on the ways in which feelings of sense of place are structured and produced in contemporary society.

CHAPTER FIVE

RURAL AND URBAN SPACE

A. An Introduction to Rural and Urban Space

Another dominant theme that emerged from the literature was the way in which residents construct the "type" of communities they live in. Again, part of this process was identifying what their community was not, rather than being able to describe exactly what it was. In the interview data, the discussions ultimately related the ways in which urban and rural areas are constructed as places that are different from and in opposition to each other. This chapter explores the way in which urban and rural areas are constructed differently and examines how this process contributes to defining a sense of place for people who live in these communities. Hummon's (1990) research on communities found that people construct their images of community and talk about their communities in opposition to each other. The research points to the need to be able to identify where you live and why. It also highlights the need to "know" the kind of place you live in so that you can feel comfortable and safe. People make these choices for a variety of reasons--work, raising a family, safety needs, etc. As is evidenced by the emergent thematic interview data, it was important that the respondents qualify the "type" of community that they live in. It seemed to be important for them to tell me, to almost "brag." I had the feeling that it was a form of catharsis for them to talk about it, almost to reaffirm the "good" qualities of their community.

Although the ideals of urban and rural living are polarized, they are also concepts and ideals that are based on mythic and symbolic structures that work to sustain and propagate the myth of the essence of an urban or rural area. In many ways, we are told how to organize our lived environments by external influences, whether that be the people that physically construct the communities, the home builders, home and garden television shows, or even home improvement stores. The process of myth making involves the codification of symbolic landscapes by these outside influences, but becomes "real" through the incorporation of these influences into everyday living spaces. By incorporating these meanings into daily life, the symbols are proliferated through society, and are reflected in the cultural landscape. Hence, the representation of the social spatial order results in the incorporation of these meanings and myths in the construction of social identities related to that particular place.

Concurrently, community ideologies work to "convey specific conceptions of what communities ought to be" (Hummon, 1990, p. 40). They work as moral landscapes, as well as encapsulating a community identity associated with place. Ideas and notions about what the community ought to be seem to be equally as pervasive in defining and discussing a sense of place in a community. For instance, urban ideology portrays cities as liberating places that are associated with freedom and individuality. Urban dwellers are proud of the fact that cities represent a degree of anonymity, and they also expound on the wealth of opportunities available in an urban environment. It is no coincidence that many urban dwellers describe small town living as oppressive and confining. This is most interesting with respect to the interview data because every respondent qualified the community that they live in this way. People living in the rural areas had very specific ideas about what it meant to live in the rural areas of Strathcona County, but they also had very definite ideas about what it meant to live in the more urban area of Sherwood Park, or even a major urban centre like Edmonton. The same sentiments can be applied to the respondents who live in more urban areas and their feelings about rural life. The ideas and myths about the types of communities that people live in contribute to and reaffirm or discount feelings of sense of place in space.

B. Rural Ideology

This discussion warrants a more detailed analysis of some of the notions associated with both rural or small town living and urban dwelling. Arguably, in the case of Sherwood Park, some analysis is also needed to look at the way in which notions of suburban communities work to contribute to our understandings of sense of place. The following list based on Hummon's (1990) community research details aspects of community living associated with small town ideology. Some characteristics of small town ideology are: quiet, slower pace, friendly ambience, good and helpful neighbours, mutual concern, personal rather than impersonal, no social barriers, family oriented, excellent places to raise children, and safer than urban areas. The following quotations reflect how respondents talk about Sherwood Park as having qualities of a small town. Of importance is that Sherwood Park has the "feel" of a small town, even though it is not necessarily a small town. The later quotation comments on how even though it is turning into a big place, it has a small town atmosphere.

> Sherwood Park has a small town feel. You used to know everybody, whether they went to the other high school or they went to our high school. When you walk through the mall, you know almost everybody. It's kind of bizarre. It's kind of an eerie feeling. I can't walk through the mall without somebody saying hello.

> Sherwood Park's a nice place. It's still small town, they offer a lot, it's a real sports town if your kids are into any kind of sports, and it's also a very close community. It's not too big for its britches. I find that a lot of the community centres are very close -which is good. That's what I like about Sherwood Park, and it is another thing that gives you that 'sense of place' is when the community you live in, even though it's turning into a big place, is still small town.

Small town ideology characterises cities and urban areas as noisy, hectic, dangerous, alienating, polluted, and places that are not conducive to rising healthy and happy families. In fact, the small town ideology characterises urban areas in opposition to more rural areas. This ideology reflects an assumption, often taken for granted, that cities are always there and can be visited once and a while. The thinking is that they are "nice places to visit, but that you would not want to live there."

C. Urban Ideology

Urban ideology, on the other hand, views cities as places of opportunity. Cities are diverse and exciting places, with a variety of "things to do." The following list, by Hummon (1990) outlines elements associated with urban ideology. Some characteristics are: opportunity, liberal and open-mined people, increased tolerance, social diversity and acceptance, personal freedom, excitement, and amenities. The following quotation from a respondent who was planning on moving from Sherwood Park to Edmonton, encapsulates the feeling of urban life as opposed to the more "small town" feel of Sherwood Park.

> The Whyte Avenue area is a playground Thursday through Saturday night, even Sunday morning. Everything I do now seems to be in the city. I work in the city, except for the substituting, I go back to Sherwood Park, and the coaching. But hockey, where I run, what I'm losing really is my space at home, where I was before. My stuff's coming with me, it's just establishing a new environment and the city is more my style now – everything that I want is in the city.

This quotation is from another respondent discusses the nature of urban environments, a seemingly endless array of accessible opportunities.

> One time, I met my friend at Starbucks, we got to talking on a Friday morning, and we hit every coffee shop on Whyte Avenue. We went back to his place and grabbed some food and then we

> were bored and thinking of things to do. And then we decided to hit every bar. I was hung-over for about four days, between the caffeine and the booze.

In keeping with the analysis, urban ideology reflects a certain disdain for small town life. To "city slickers," small town life is described as backward, overly public, and a place where "everyone knows your business." It is a confining and stagnant place with a lack of opportunities and amenities. According to urban dwellers, small town people are intolerant, ignorant, and oblivious to issues of diversity. The following quotation from a respondent is an example of the perceptions that city people or people with a "city" mentality have about people in a small town. In this case the respondent is applying a "city" mentality to people in Sherwood Park.

> I'm fascinated by people. I used to go to the coffee shop every day and read the paper and get my fix. Sometimes I don't get through the paper, I just watch people. I'm mesmerized and I wonder how people manage to walk themselves to Starbucks because they look so incompetent. I like people. I like watching them. I don't necessarily like to interact with all of them.

Although the small town and urban ideologies are pervasive and powerful, arguably they are built on mythical ideas of what those places are. For instance, small town life is not crime free, just as urban areas are not free of racial and social diversity issues. However, the myths that these places are built are in some way related to feelings of sense of place and perceptions of what it means to belong in a place. The collective mythology of place has a profound impact on experience and behaviour in place.

D. Suburban Ideology

In many ways suburban communities are seen as being the best of both worlds. They are places in the middle of big cities and small towns, both in a geographic and imaginary sense. In suburbs, there is easy access to urban centres, but the community has a "small town" feel. Typically, notions associated with suburbs are that they are clean, quiet, convenient, and good places to raise children. The following respondent discusses this in relation to Sherwood Park.

> I stay homebound. That's what I love about Sherwood Park, it has everything I want. Wal-Mart and Zellers meet my needs. I don't have a million Club Z points for no reason. I love to go to Wal-Mart. I like the sense of competition. The other thing I love is all the fast-food places. You know, you just kind of slide on through the grease into Sherwood Park.

The respondent, a long-term resident, discusses the feeling of first moving to a community and then having the community change over time.

> When we moved out here, we thought we were moving to the country. The urban area moved to us. It's not that bad. Actually here it's good. We have the best of both worlds. I can walk to Wal-Mart. They call me by my first name. I'll have to not go so often.

> Or, you can walk to get a coffee. Or you can walk to Canadian
> Tire.

In the infancy stages, Sherwood Park, did not have all of the convenient amenities, like Wal-Mart and Zellers. But, as the preceding quote suggests, things change and when the conveniences come in, they are not necessarily considered bad things. Often times, they are welcomed by the people living in the community, because while the small town feel in the community is retained, life becomes more convenient. For instance, previously, this respondent might have gone into Edmonton to shop; now he or she can walk to Wal-Mart.

In particular, respondents in Strathcona County discussed the prevalence of more "nature" in the suburbs. It appears to be an important element of their sense of place. However, it is also curious that although Strathcona County is world renowned for ecological diversity and protected areas (e.g. Elk Island National Park, Ministik Bird Sanctuary, Cooking Lake etc.), respondents did not mention these areas. In fact, many respondents mentioned more artificially constructed natural areas as having importance. Respondents comment on the importance of natural areas in suburbs, but, in residential areas, a "sanitized nature" is often the preference. As long as the environment is clean and tidy and has a "natural" feel to it, residents appear to be happy.

> Sherwood Park is clean. There's no graffiti or anything like that.
> Or what they've done with Broadmore Lake[1]. They need to do
> more of that. I like it when they keep it kind of natural and, I know
> it's indirectly natural cause it's man made. But it's clean and it's a

> nice place to be, and they're building things around there. It really looks good. So I think it is important that they continue to do that.

The following Sherwood Park respondent talks ~~as~~ if he is living in Edmonton, claiming to "have the River Valley" in his community even though the River Valley that he is discussing is in Edmonton. Yet, in the same paragraph, he discusses how he does not like the city because of cars and pollution. There seems to be this idea that in the suburbs you can "take" the things about the city that you like and "leave" the things you do not.

> I don't want to live in a concrete jungle. I think the cool thing about living in the Edmonton area is we have a river valley, which is just awesome. And even in Sherwood Park, there's lots of trees and a lot of bike trails and, I like to roller blade so it's always been important to me that we keep this sort of atmosphere around. I think it's important that if you want to go for a walk you can. Without having to be around a bunch of cars and smog. You don't want to be stuck in that. It's important that we get fresh air.

The following comment illustrates the importance of being able to have places to do physical activities and the belief that "natural" areas facilitate those activities.

> Sometimes when you have a bad day there is nothing better than to go do something physical. When I need to vent or something like that, I do something physical and I think it's important for me to

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[1] Broadmore Lake is a golf course development in the centre of Sherwood Park.

> have places where I can do that. And the more natural we keep Sherwood Park, the better. If we continue with the concrete jungle that we're creating in Edmonton, people might have to choose something else.

This quotation suggests that the respondent believes the city is an oppressive place with rules and regulations about what you can and can not do whereas in nature there is freedom and less stress or anxiety.

> In the city there are too many cars and too many people. I feel claustrophobic and I think it goes back to being a whole safety issue. I think of New York or I think of Toronto, it just freaks me out. The fact that you don't see a tree, you see nothing but buildings. We all become zombies, we walk in between the lines. We are told when to walk, told when to stop. In nature you don't have to stop at a stop sign. I think that's what I like. You have the freedom to do things without having to worry or stress about it too much.

There is the notion of personal freedom is associated with suburban living that is seen as being different than in the city. Perceptions of these important environments appear to be very prominent in how we think about spaces. Because of the type of development in Sherwood Park specifically, more analysis into the ways in which suburban communities are constructed is necessary.

For many people, suburbs connote domesticity, children, family, and a good home life. There is an inherent assumption that people in suburbs are more concerned with raising their children properly, in safe places, which are somehow more secure than other communities. This idea of the suburbs as "crime free" is used to imply that they are great places for children. The following quotation from a respondent discusses feelings associated with safety in the suburbs.

> It is just the way it is set up, there aren't a lot of alleys, there aren't a lot of dark areas. It's well lit. There are a lot of things for kids to do. Which I think is important because as a teacher I know, when I have my own kids, I don't care what they do, as long as they're happy and staying busy. There's so many things for kids to do in this area, whether it be the skate board ramp, whether it be the bike paths, whether it be tennis courts, whatever, these kids have something to do, and when they have something to do, they stay out of trouble. I think that's where the safe part comes in, people have a sense of, they've moved out there for a reason, they don't want to live in the big city, and they just have a sense of fear there. Here it is a lot quieter. The traffic isn't as big, and I would say it's a lot safer, physically and for kids.

The notion of suburbs being safe places was a recurring theme with many respondents. The home and community should be safe, and the notion of safety contributes to positive feelings of sense of place. The need for feelings of comfort and well-being appear to be the foundation for establishing a residence in a place like a suburb. As a consequence of their location, suburbs appear to bring together the best qualities of small towns without their perceived liabilities (Hummon, 1990). The following quotation from a respondent encapsulates this idea.

> I think Sherwood Park is a little different than the city because it's a suburb, not a big city. When we were kids, the rumour was that you could leave your doors open, go on vacation for two weeks and nothing would move. There is a new generation of younger kids around that are doing the things that we did as kids and it's neat to see. It's just a great place for kids because there's so many opportunities and avenues for them to be successful. Without parents having to worry about them walking somewhere. I think that's what makes it kind of unique, is the fact that it's safe. We have the highest cop per people ratio in Alberta.

Again, this respondent talks about the safety of Sherwood Park, especially where children are involved. There is the notion that you could trust the people around you even if you did not know them. Also, the quote mentions the fact that Sherwood Park has the highest police per capita in Alberta. This highlights that fact that Sherwood Park is a highly controlled and policed environment. Some people might see the presence of a high number of police as evidence of a community that would be unsafe without such control, but this respondent believes the presence of police lead to a safe environment.

The need to prevent crime is very important to uphold the notion of suburbs as a safe and comfortable places to live in.

The following quote is another example of the perception of Sherwood Park as being void of crime. It is a place where bad things are not supposed to happen. There are myriad things to do, kids feel safe, and community members are trustworthy and always looking out for you.

> Sherwood Park was a great community to grow up in. When we were kids, it was great because we were active all the time, whether it be football in the summer or hockey in the winter, we were always playing something. We had a really close knit group of kids. It was a safe place to be and you just felt safe, you were always around people that you could trust. It was cool.

Again, the following quotation depicts the respondent's knowledge that Strathcona County could become a more urban centre as a result of business growth and development. The quotation also expresses how the respondent will continue to move farther away from the problem to have some control over their environment.

> And I think Strathcona County will grow into Beaumont and grow into Ellerslie, everybody will get their turn at growing. Depends on where the business is coming. See a lot of development's going on the highway there, so, it kind of makes a trend of people that go and live there. And the city's getting so big and so scary, I don't like hearing about gangs and drive-by shootings and stabbings, you

> know. I said we'll be on an acreage so fast our heads will be spinning if that starts happening here. Got to have some control of my little darlings. You know? Sad but true.

However, like the small town and urban ideologies, suburbs are seen as being constructed in opposition to something else. Suburbia is constructed as being the mid-point between the city and country. On a continuum of urban and rural, suburbia would fall in the middle. Because of this, suburban developments seem to lack the extreme conditions associated with urban or rural life, even though when residents describe them they have a "small town" feel and the best of the urban areas, meaning amenities and opportunities. The intermediary point of suburbia is a place that seems to be almost a diluted version of either an urban environment or a rural environment. Suburbs are the kind of places where you know how they look like even before you go there; it is easy to conjure up the image in the mind's eye of what the physical place looks. Of course, what goes on in the "inside" of a suburb, or the inside of a house, is anyone's guess, but the image of the physical space of a suburb and the way it is organized is a notion that is commonly held.

Suburbia often connotes sameness; a homogenous place characterized by uniformity. Elements of sameness and uniformity can be seen in various aspects of suburban development from landscaping to architecturally controlled building requirements. Because of a lack of complex urban life, suburban life is often seen as being boring and conservative. However, suburbia is a retreat from urban ills for many residents.

The state of being "in-between" seems to be a comfortable place for many people, contributing to overall feelings of sense of place.

Suburbs are peripheral to city centres and are very dependant on the city for work and play. They lack an identity of their own and are thought of as places for the masses, with identical homes and people and monotonous ways of life. These sentiments may be a result of the anti-urban mentality in response to the current condition in many cities. Suburbia mediates simplicity and complexity, community and individual, tradition and modernity, in the ideal of the middle landscape. That there is obviously a middle class occupying these landscapes is hardly a coincidence.

Suburban development changed the face of the cultural and geographic landscape. Post WWII, the rate and scale of suburban development increased dramatically. With an expanding economy, increased demand for housing, sophisticated modes of transportation and inner city "ghettoization," suburbia seemed to be a haven for the middle class. It was a viable financial investment and an aesthetically appealing alternative to the physical, social, and moral danger of the city. With increases in suburban living and the need to accommodate this kind of lifestyle quickly, developments took on a uniformity that delineates much of the stigma of suburbia today. In general, suburban developments denote physical and social uniformity.

In suburbia, the social and cultural landscape becomes a place to assert some kind of individuality within the homogeneity of uniform development. Personalizing residential living space becomes increasingly important. Suburbanites tend to have a hyperactive social life in order to compete with neighbours and maintain or increase status. Conservatism and middle class anxiety over status competition create a fundamental ambivalence to social diversity. People in suburbs are seen as less tolerant and are described as being exploiters of cities and urban residents. This attitude can contribute to a moral malaise and personal estrangement, also referred to as the "cocooning" mentality. The "keeping up with the Joneses" mentality plays out in the notion of suburban competitiveness, consumerism, and constant dissatisfaction with current conditions. The following quote is indicative of the perception that many people have of families that live in the suburbs.

> Someone I went to school with who grew up in Sherwood Park, we were all sitting around between classes one day having coffee and she's talking about how everyone from Sherwood Park, when they graduate from high school they all get cars. And stuff like that. And I'm thinking, I lived here and I didn't get a car. I got nothing from my parents. I think the perception of Sherwood Park is weird.

As suburban living continues to be the trend in middle class residential development, the suburbs evolve to become more like urban centres. The landscapes of suburbia reflect the landscape of the city with fast food restaurants, "big box" shopping mall developments, and other typically urban amenities. The following quotation from a respondent discusses the prevalence of growth and development in the Sherwood Park area.

> It goes hand in a hand with population, the population's getting higher, so therefore we get places like Wal-Mart and Pay-Less Shoes. We're the hamlet full of restaurants, especially fast food,

> we're all gonna be three thousand pounds. We're gonna get a huge movie theatre too. All of these things are happening because people are moving to this area, building houses or living here, bringing up their kids there, and the population's getting just bigger.

The following quote describes the respondent's reaction to having new shopping opportunities in Sherwood Park. Ease, accessibility and convenience all seem to play a large part in the positive reaction to radical changes in the cultural landscape.

> Sometimes I just wish IGA didn't go up down the road cause I just drop by there everyday now and probably spend more money. We just go to IGA. And of course they have a bakery and it smells so good when you get in there. But actually it's good; I like it. And it's nice to have 7-11 close so you can take the kids for a slurpee after. Before the expansion of Sherwood Park out in the rural areas, you really had to drive around to do anything.

The following gives another interesting view on commercial expansion in Sherwood Park.

> You know the Wal-Mart that has just been built? I'd say before it came we weren't very happy. When we came they said there would never be any development on this side, that is, south of Wye road or the freeway, the freeway now. And of course that's all

> changed completely so, this used to be a very nice subdivision. When we started to try to promote business on this south of the freeway we attended meetings and so on but it didn't do any good. Just for your record, taxes are more important than people. According to the county. Well that's what we think.

Residents welcome the development, as it adds to the convenience and ease of everyday living. The following quote from a respondent addresses the need for development in Sherwood Park to accommodate the desire of young families to provide sporting opportunities for their children. It also highlights the fact that people are willing to pay in terms of taxes in order to have opportunities in their community.

> Once people see how much Sherwood Park is growing, then they will see it's a good thing. At least they've allowed lots of development. We need sports facilities so bad. This is a sports oriented town. And that brings in the games and then all that does is increase value in Sherwood Park. The people who are complaining are the ones who don't have kids in sports. I mean taxes are going to go up, but it's no worse than the city. If anything, I think it's better. My taxes aren't nearly as high as what my siblings pay in St. Albert.

However, with these seemingly positive developments come other urban ills. Increases in crime, tax rates and declining school systems are characteristics of the urbanisation of the suburbs. There is necessarily a fear of change. A fear that "they," the municipal planners and decision makers, are somehow transforming a place and turning it from "good" to "bad," even though most people would recognise that change is a necessary occurrence.

> All these people are retiring and they move into these seniors' villages. It makes sense with the demographic. Offering these things does make sense because the people there have the most amount of money, even if they're on pension, and there's so many of them that I guess you just have to set something up for them. They're just not going to live in their houses and that. What's happening is they're moving to the senior's places.

A quote from another respondent echoes the previous sentiment. Community change can have an alienating effect.

> One thing that is frustrating me about Strathcona County is the fact that they're turning it into a senior's village. And they don't realise that they can't do that. They are building all these senior lodges, they're not building any apartment buildings, or affordable housing for people just starting out. And they're losing a lot of people because of it. And that's why I am going to leave. It is because I can't find a decent place to live. I just find it frustrating. And I hear older people talk all the time, cause I have a lot of relatives that live out there now, complaining about the sports complex they're

> building. Sherwood Park has always been for sports and kids and if you don't like it, get out. That's the way I look at it. I think that complex is gonna be awesome for the growth of that area. I just don't understand how making a place better and giving kids an avenue to be successful can be such a bad thing.

Demographic changes aside, community make-up changes and evolves over time, disrupting "sameness" and the myth of the suburb as a place that is protected from change. Change disrupts notions of what should happen in a place and can cause feelings of frustration and anger, contributing to changes in feelings of sense of place.

This quote demonstrates the respondent's nostalgia for days gone by and the early days of Strathcona County. The respondent comments on the way that Sherwood Park was "supposed" to be. Arguably, it is far from a predominately working class community based on the petroleum industry.

> It was never meant to be this big. It was meant for a little village for people that were working in the petroleum industries. You would think the biggest idiot in the world designed these roads cause you can't go through a straight line. You have to go around the traffic circle, and it's a big circle, and it's just stupid. Takes you fifteen minutes to go everywhere in that place.

The following quote characterises the feeling of alienation felt by community members when attempting to become involved in community planning.

Losing control over your environment and not knowing how to stop imminent change is difficult to negotiate.

> I sat through meetings, I went to board meetings, all through this garbage and then I got the run-around. So it doesn't really make me want to give back to the community when you have to do that kind of stuff all the time.

Suburbanists do not characterize suburbs as predominately white communities, despite obvious racial separation (Hummon, 1990). The conspicuous absence of people from other ethnic communities begs questions about the spatial organisation of society on a whole. It may be that suburbanists do not conceive of racial homogeneity as distinctly suburban. Some people may not value difference and thus do not address this community attribute when talking about their place of residence. The following quote from a respondent was in response to a discussion about the racial stereotypes associated with suburbia and called "Sherwood Park as a white ghetto." This comment highlights the fact that Strathcona County is largely a white middle class community, and as such can be termed a place in the city that members of a minority live because of feeling social or economic pressure. In the case of suburbia, the social and economic pressure is almost self-induced and again, based on perceived notions of safety and appropriate residential living conditions.

The following quotation describes the type of people who move to Sherwood Park and how it is important to have the same kind of people around to foster that sense of community.

> Sherwood Park is just very small town. Small town people. A certain kind of person moves out here. And it is important to know that you are surrounded by the same kind of people. You know, you're attracted to Sherwood Park for certain reasons and I think it's the closeness that Sherwood Park offers that is why people stay here. You know, why you become the loyal Parkee.

When buying a home and searching for a community to live in, location is the key to the decision making process. The other main factors include the physical structure, housing prices and community attributes, namely safety, schools, and distance to work. The perception of the community having "no racial" problems is another factor that comes into the decision making process. It is interesting to peel back layers and look at some of the ways in which suburbia is constructed around the notion of "sameness" and fear of difference. Arguably, it is no coincidence that in suburban communities like Sherwood Park, and even the broader community of Strathcona County, minority groups are almost non-existent. It appears that the spatial organisation of suburbia reflects a fear of urbanity connected to diversity and difference, and it is interesting to wonder where these feelings originate. Hummon (1990) suggests that suburban organisation is a socially acceptable way to characterize the contemporary landscape, enabling residents to avoid discussing racial issues, and in fact, avoid dealing with social and political issues inherently rooted in geographic place.

The following quotation discusses the issue of dealing with obvious racial issues associated to place.

> My son was really very young when he said this. But, in effect he was making an accusation and it made me very uncomfortable - he said –"So, where are the Natives if we live on the Prairie?" From a very early age, he had some sense that he was not seeing the entire picture. So, anyway, he was right. This is a pretty insulated little community to live in. It's interesting, my observation is that kids in high school still manage to divide themselves - whether or not there are differences - they just create them. So, it just goes to show that maybe you're better off in a community where in fact you have to deal with racial difference, where it actually exists, instead of pretending there is no problem at all. And I've had some experiences teaching in small towns where I think mixing people is good for children to learn how to have tolerance and understanding. I am really into thinking about how people are sort of separated by class, and I guess that's my perception of the suburbs and Sherwood Park. I have always had reservations about living here. So, as I say, certainly there was a period where I would gladly have moved - where I didn't have a lot of commitment, and I'm still not sure I do.

Goldberg (1993) states that racism has become institutionally normalized in and through spatial configuration. The rationalisation and naturalization of space reflects social power relations within the site. Suburbs are graded in terms of their distance from industry and urban slums and their proximity to leisure and consumer opportunities (Goldberg). Private space carries a certain amount of social currency. The private space created in the suburb becomes a refuge from the "public." However, Goldberg argues that planning ideology is somehow implicated in racial marginalization. He provides the following example of the housing projects that characterize many inner cities in major metropolises, particularly American. The projects present a generic image without identity. They are places of crime, social disorder, dirt, disease, and unemployment (Goldberg). This contrasts the idea of home found in "safe" areas. In the suburbs, homes in particular are described as places of peace, free from fear and division; as Goldberg says, "homes in the suburb are a geography of relative self determination and sanctity." He goes on to say that lacking control over where you live and the conditions in which you live perpetuates helplessness and negligence in the projects. "Covert re-articulations of these concepts continue to provide criteria and rationalisations for differential inclusion in the 'normal' for the right to express power, for urban location and displacement in the process of urban gentrification" (Goldberg). The effects of marginalization are spatial examples of the ways in which the politics of racial identity are imprinted in the landscape. These effects are not just physical, but include the spaces in and through which differences are created (Goldberg).

Access to urban amenities allows suburbia to escape the provincialism and oppressiveness of small town life while maintaining a more natural and safe feeling than the city. Suburban dwellers may not conceptualise their community as a suburb or a small town – in fact they describe it in many other ways. As the data reflect, respondents talk about the community of Sherwood Park in mythical proportions. This reflects the power of community ideology to further community interests and sentiments, but also the power of community ideology to perpetuate many social and political inequities.

Furthermore, interpretations of a community's problem only serve to deepen the commitment to a community that renders their community the source of the "good life". Community ideology legitimates personal sentiment and social interest through the apparent voice of reason (Hummon, 1990). Community identity reflects the interpretation of self that uses community as a locus of attachment or an image for self-characterization within a social context. It is argued in this thesis that geographic place and the way that people talk about their place involves implicit moral perspectives. This in turn reflects a selective affiliation with a place based on perceptions of safety and fear of the unknown associated with social and political difference.

Having said that, it appears that there are those who do not identify with any community form and prefer to be "outside" of the social and political implications of place. The following respondent discusses how identifying with place is not important in his understanding of lived experience.

> I don't identify with Sherwood Park at all. I don't even know where things are in Sherwood Park. You give me an address and all it means to me is, is it by the old McDonald's or the new McDonald's? And I just don't really have a lot of friends in Sherwood Park. So there's just no real attraction to the town. So there's no need for me to care. It's just another town.

This respondent's ambivalence towards place is indicative of symbolic placelessness that is no doubt telling in and of itself. Respondents in this case had minimal awareness of the community landscape. They held definite beliefs about communities but insisted that forms of community are not different depending on where you live. Community, in this way, does not act as a locus or sign of identity. In fact the notion of place may be used to distance oneself from any feeling of responsibility towards social and political issues that are intricately woven into place.

The reductiveness of stereotyping can be seen as a means of simultaneously conceptualising newness, multiplicity and fluctuations. As individuals seek to locate themselves in a migrating world, so an imaging of order and collectivity in terms of social stereotyping is a means of positing a wished-for definitional stability while simultaneously being able to come to terms with the continuity of possible radical personal change. The places where we locate can act as a source of consistent, expectable, broad, and immediate ways of knowing the social world. Place is a means to express a multitude of complex emotions, uniformity, and regularity. The individual can be seen adapting and adopting stereotypes, developing his/her own routine relations with them by pitting one against the other, personalizing what they purport in his/her own image. The stereotypes can act as a vehicle by which the migrating individual can consistently contextualize him or herself and others.

In the imagined stability of the suburb is security and assurance. The cultural currency is known and understandable. The more stereotypically the social environment is imaged, the more dynamic and diverse the role each person must play in order to uphold these mythic beliefs. This is especially interesting when the stereotype is seen not primarily as an instrument of prejudice or dominance, and not as evidence of thinking in stale collective terms, but rather as a means for individuals to project and establish secure personal belonging in a constantly shifting, complex world (Hummon, 1990).

It is possible to construct a place that is holistic and consistent and a place that is able to facilitate a community to adapt collectively, a community that encourages people to feel good about themselves and the places that they live. A collective stereotypical way of living is not necessarily a bad thing. It is something that seems to give people a sense of well-being and belonging. It is, however, a potentially dangerous concept especially when the physical location reifies similarity and marginalizes others.

Partaking in the common and conventional, even a stereotypical discourse, can represent a way for the individual to secure a personal preserve or a haven that seems to relate to conceptualisations of home and community. This can occur in urban, rural, and suburban environments. However, these actions necessarily become formulaic, automatic, and rehearsed rather than creative or freely generating. Behaviour becomes homogenised and is reflected in the organisation of the cultural landscape. The built environment is constructed to reflect uniformity and this shared understanding of a cultural way of life. Stereotypes allow simplistic and fantastic claims to be made about a group's manifold membership, claims which all tend to be based upon ambiguous ideals and assumptions (Hummon, 1990). Stereotypes are seen to form a fortress in which groups can barricade themselves and be universally convinced of the safety, rectitude, and respectability of their shared traditions, while at the same time, aroused into making prejudiced but self-fulfilling responses not towards real others, but towards myths or mythic figures (Rapport, 1995).

This identity rhetoric and process of defining social and cultural otherness is especially prevalent in the cultures of urban, rural and suburban areas, and necessarily impacts feelings of sense of place in a geographic locale.

E. Summary Discussion

To conclude, the rural and urban space binary opposition is a very useful mechanism to discuss how selected residents of Strathcona County articulate their sense of place. By polarizing the two concepts of rural and urban and then exposing the middle-ground in an examination of suburbia, thought provoking issues come to the forefront. For instance, race and difference seem to structure place relationships and produce spatial relations. The sense of place literature, particularly the newer work conducted by Williams and Stuart (1998) acknowledges the social, cultural, and political implications inherent to notions of sense of place. However, more research needs to be done to examine the ways in which race, gender, and class become entrenched in the spatial organisation of vernacular places and the ways in which space affirms social stereotypes based on fear of difference and the unknown. Sense of place can be used as a tool to engage in dialogue about perceived difference and then can be mapped on the landscape to determine the ways in which these relationships become reproduced in spatial organisation and development of the built environment.

CHAPTER SIX

LONG- AND SHORT-TERM RESIDENCY

A. An Introduction to Long- and Short-Term Residency

In many cases, long- and short-term residency effect sense of place and feeling of "rootedness" or "belonging" in a place. Therefore, most of the literature focusing on length of residency in place coincides with the data collected in this study. It is interesting to note, however, how people talk about their length of residency, specifically when asked to articulate their views on sense of place in general and in relation to Strathcona County in particular. Therefore, this chapter will explore the binary of long- and short-term residency in place. It is apparent that length of residency is a key component in feelings of sense of place, but there are other factors involved that confound this relationship, for instance, neighbour relations, employment in the community, and family situations.

As is consistent with the previous analysis, this chapter sets out to disrupt the binary of long- and short-term residency. Although it is possible that a longer duration of residency in a place would contribute to strong feelings of sense of place merely because of temporal interaction in place, this does not explain the fact that children often have a very acute sense of place. There is evidence to suggest that place imprints itself on a child's memory as early as age three and can be a very powerful factor in place relationships for the duration of the life span. Furthermore, this distinction privileges a temporal or historical way of seeing the world over a spatial or geographical way of seeing the world. If a geographical imagination is employed, as opposed to a historical imagination, the correlation of sense of place and length of residency emerges as only one of many elements that comprise the notion of sense of place (Daniels, 1992). For the purposes of this chapter, the notion of rootedness in place because of long-term residency and newness in place are polarized to expose the middle area for discussion. Adult and child relationships in place are explored to expose how, although an important factor in the development of a sense of place, length of residency does not fully explain how people claim places as their own as being representative of identity and as sites of resistance. Tradition and modernity are explored to determine the effect of nostalgia and newness in the attempt to show how these concepts become ingrained in our individual and collective sense of place. Arguably, the space-time relationship is a very prominent relationship when examining sense of place. However, I would ask the reader to take off their historical and sociological imagination "hats" when reading this chapter and replace them with a geographical imagination. The goal is not to divorce space from any temporal construct, but rather to disrupt commonly held notions of people-place relationships associated strictly with time.

B. Rootedness vs. Newness

In order to delve into a discussion of long-and short-term residency in a spatial sense, rather than solely temporal, a brief explanation of the geographical imagination is necessary to frame the following chapter. Lefebvre (1991), in a seminal work called the *Production of Space* describes space as the outcome of a process with many aspects and many contributing currents, signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly experienced, and practical and theoretical. According to Lefebvre, space has a history, one that is grounded in nature or natural conditions that are always endowed with specific characteristics (climate, geology etc.) In this sense, the relationship of the space to the time that gives rise to it takes on an aspect that differs from temporal notions of "history". Lefebrve concludes that the history of space, within the historical and diachronic realms, and the past are forever leaving their inscriptions on the writing tablet of space.

Lefebvre (1991) says that space is neither subject for an object but rather a social reality or a set of relations and forms. For Lefebvre, history must account for both representational spaces and representations of space, but above all for their interrelationships and their links with social practice. Soja (1993) calls for a geographical and spatial imagination. Critical geographers have detailed that there has been a privileging of time and history over space and geography. Space tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as rich, life, and dialectic (Soja). Postmodern social transformations involve a re-ordering of space. New possibilities are being created from re-thinking temporal and spatial ways of viewing the world. Soja calls this a triple dialectic of space, time, and social being and a transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography, and modernity (Soja).

Massey (1994), in the book *Space, Place and Gender*, outlines ideas for a global sense of place. This reflects my thinking most accurately and can take the concept of sense of place to a new level of understanding. It is her way of attempting to develop a progressive sense of place. Firstly, she says that place is not static. Places can be seen as processes, just like the people or capital that flows between and among them. Secondly, places do not have boundaries in the sense of divisions that frame simple enclosures. The definition does not have to be through counter-position to the outside, it can come through the particularity of linkage to the 'outside', which is itself, part of what constitutes the place (Massey). Thirdly, places do not have a single unique identity which is representative of all the people that reside or visit. Fourthly, the previous statement does not deny the importance of the uniqueness of place. The specificity of place is continually reproduced, but it is not specificity that results from some long, internalized history (Massey). There are a number of elements that combine to produce the specificity and uniqueness of place. There are layers upon layers of linkages to both micro and macro conceptualisations of place that serve to situate place into many spheres of experience (Massey).

Place, location, and position offer roots to the histories and identities that many people require in order to situate and contextualize lived experience. Kaplan (1996) argues that location is not useful when it is construed to be a reflection of authentic, primordial identities that are established and continually reaffirmed. Furthermore, places can serve to normalize and naturalize boundaries, margins, and difference. Kaplan writes that locations are most useful when they are used to deconstruct any dominant hierarchy or hegemonic order. Notions of place are further problematized when constructed as sites of similarity when clearly, there are histories which indicate inequality. Nostalgic places and places of "sameness" are mythical places that serve to imprint stereotypical images of space. Only when the notion of place is used to de-stabilize unexamined or stereotypical images can we recognise social and cultural relations in place (Kaplan).

a) Rootedness

In many ways having "roots" in a place connotes feelings of familiarity comfort, notions that have been proven to contribute to sense of place. Rootedness implies having a secure point of reference from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp on one's own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular (Relph, 1976). The need for roots is similar to the need for order, liberty, responsibility, equality, and security (Relph). This is very much in line with how many respondents's discussed their home place of Strathcona County. The following quotation from a respondent discusses the experience of growing up in a place.

> I grew up here, everybody knew everybody, and I lived here from the time I was a year. I went to grade school there, junior high, high school, graduated, and then went to college from there. So I knew everyone, and you didn't have to really prove yourself to anybody, you just knew everyone and just liked everyone, and making friends was easy and fitting in was easy.

Relph discusses rootedness as communal or personal experiences of places where there is often a close attachment and familiarity that is part of knowing and being known is a place. Relph goes on to say that with time the familiarity evolves and becomes not just detailed knowledge or place, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place. Rootedness in place is a feeling closely associated with a temporal way of knowing place.

It is slowly developed and gently grown (Relph). The following story from a respondent highlights intimate connections to place that occur overtime and that are "gently grown".

> We sold sheep, relatively few actually but they were pure-breds. We used to show them every summer and that was what I did for the summer. Actually there was a weaver's guild and they would buy it all before it ever came off the sheep. For spinning. It was not bad wool. Yeah. It was beautiful wool. We used to have chickens. In fact we used to raise fancy chickens, so we had twelve or fourteen different kinds. And doves, dozens--which lay coloured eggs. Coloured eggshells, not the inside as you can tell. They were like green and blue eggs. We have had all sorts of critters in this place; dogs, cats, everything. Our kids grew up with it and the animals got old and died and that was it.

Rootedness is usually developed through direct experience of place overtime, but as Relph notes, can also be an abrupt ecstatic experience. These personal places can act like some sort of peak experience (Maslow, 1969; Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) where there is a feeling of pure individuality and identity that stems from an intimate encounter with place. As mentioned earlier, this is recognised most acutely in childhood experience with place, as many children can recall places that constitute vital points of reference. However, the following quotation from a respondent captures this abrupt feeling of being "at home" in a faraway place.

> It was interesting because when I was in Greece with my mother, last November, we'd go into Greek orthodox churches and I found that every time I walked in there I had the sense that I was coming home and it was actually bizarre. I think it was the sense of history there, and I felt roots and I found that part of the world to be a more spiritual place. Maybe because the history is closer to the time of Christ. I can't really explain what it was. Except that it was more than just a feeling. And the churches are always open and people in groups, on their way to work would stop by on their way to work, walk in and light a candle, turn around, make the sign of the cross, say a prayer, and then continue on to work. There's an interesting concept, in that it wasn't home, it was very far away from home. And yet there was something very powerful. It was a very special place--where you belong. I assume it was that connection to feeling like a higher power so, but it was also cultural, in that I think that the churches and the paintings in them were somehow familiar. It was cultural -I'm not Greek- but it's more similar to what I grew up with. It was really interesting. And I just felt closer to something that I maybe believe in but sometimes doesn't feel very close.

Concurrently, these experiences are not limited to certain kinds of places. On the contrary, as Relph notes, even in the deepest suburbia (a place criticized for a lack of culture), people put down roots and develop a sense of concern for where they live. This quite evident in Strathcona County as people are very loyal and respectful of the place for reasons other than physical attributes present in the cultural landscape. The following quotation depicts this sense of deep concern and loyalty for places that comes with "gently growing roots" that Relph discusses.

> There are so many Sherwood Parker's that have been here forever. It won't change. People will always care about this place. The community keeps on top of everything. They can't get away with too much. Sherwood Park is a very loyal place. Being from Edmonton, Gladstone, Yellowknife, Peace River, all these other places I've lived—nothing compares to the loyalty here. They're very loyal and protective people.

One of the most common places associated with sense of place was the home. The home place becomes a centre of felt value over the course of time and length of interaction. Our experience of place and equally of home is a dialectical one—balancing the need to stay with a desire to escape (Relph, 1976). As Relph notes, when one of these needs is too readily satisfied, we suffer either from nostalgia or a sense of being uprooted from a place. These factors contribute to places becoming both meaningful and memorable, but also can contribute to feelings of oppression and imprisonment in place.

However, the data suggests that the idea of home is as much an imagined place as it is a physical place. In this sense, there are things that we automatically associate with home, but that may not necessarily be reflected in the actual "home place". Furthermore, people, interaction, activity, and institutional involvement all play a major role in feelings of sense of place and rootedness in a home place. More importantly, the data reflects that overall feeling of well-being or comfort in place is necessary to feeling rooted in a place. Hence, newcomers feel slightly alienated and logic would follow that people who have been in a place for a considerable length of time would feel a greater sense of place. However, these feelings of sense of place may not necessarily be connected to length of residency, but rather they may be a reflection of broader feelings of sense of place, for example feelings of well-being or belonging.

b) Newness

Coming to a new place is always challenging and this experience can be magnified when there is a strong communal entity that exists in the place. The following quotation discusses what it is like to come to a new place.

> I think moving here was a huge growing experience for me. I never had to work at making friends before, I never had to work, and I'm not really outgoing, so I never had to be outgoing and I never had to tell people about me before because everyone knew me and I never had to show people what I was like. And it made me evaluate myself and the place that I was at. I had to stop and think how much I knew myself so that was a big thing for me.

This respondent discusses her experiences of coming to a new place, where family and social institutions were strong. The process was made easier by the existing social bonds in familiar kinds of places. For instance knowing the idea of "family" and how that social unit works or supposed to work made this transition easier. In this instance, knowing that the church was there was an important element in making the transition easier. Familiar places, such as role or position in the family and more common physical structures, like the church, even though they are outside of the home place, contribute to fostering a sense of place. However, it can also be challenging to "fit" into already existing social and cultural places. The respondent went on to discuss how being from a different place can contribute to feelings of alienation because you become the centre of attention, a feeling that might not connote comfort in a place.

> Maybe they were just wondering how I would fit in. Plus the fact that I'm an American, some of the people up here have preconceived ideas or whatever. I didn't like being the centre of attention at all, especially at church. I didn't like feeling like people were being nice to me because they felt sorry for me because I was not from here. I still think it will take time. In retrospect I can see it was good for me, it was challenging for me, it still is at times challenging for me. Moving here was definitely a learning experience for me--it was so overwhelming.

The following comment discusses the importance of having some consistency even in a relatively new place. This respondent is the constant, the person the give the "official hello and welcome" to new people in the community. "Knowing" neighbours contributes to strong feelings of sense of place for this respondent.

> Sense of place also means getting on with my neighbours. And this is a very transient place being a new place. It's always been me who makes the first official 'hello.' And it's amazing how you break down the barriers with people and can make them feel comfortable. So, at first I think it took us a while when they first moved in. You have to break them down and say you know, it's okay for your kids to wander into my house, and we're not going to do anything to them. You know, so, it's a good neighbourhood. Which would be hard if we did need to leave. I mean we were the first house here and we're the original owners. The houses around us have already been sold once or twice, but we have stayed.

The experience of being new in a place is different than being in a place for a long time. However, the social and political climate can contribute to greater feelings of sense of place than just the physical environment. Although the physical environment impacts sense of place, feeling a sense of being welcomed and belonging from the broader community can be more influential.

It is interesting to explore how and what places youth appropriate as their own and to what degree that contributes to defining identity and connections to place.

It would be insightful to map Strathcona County in such a way as to plot out the areas that youth occupy. Considering there is strong parental opposition to youth being on the streets, youth continue to define their own spaces that take on very important and specific meanings. Sibley (1995) writes that this is largely due to adult desire for order and youth desire for disorder. He continues by saying that the sense of boundaries around places, anxieties over time, and feelings of attachment to places will be affected by the domestic environment, as it is shaped by family. Further, the opportunities for control or for giving children their own spaces will be affected by the size of the home, the way the space in the home is organized and the relationship between public and private space (Sibley).

F. Summary Discussion

Giroux (1993, p. 27) states that experiences need to be viewed from a position of empowerment rather than from a position of weakness. He goes on to say that knowledge needs to be made meaningful in order to be made critical and transformative. This is a useful statement when assessing the meaning of place experiences. The places we come from are equally important and should be recognised as sites of knowledge and possibility (Giroux, 1993, p. 27). By accepting different places of knowledge and experience, we can uncover richer meanings of how the world is negotiated and made real. The historical significance of place and experiences in place, culture, community, and traditions, affirm the places that people come from (Giroux, 1993, p. 117).

CHAPTER SEVEN

LOCAL AND NON-LOCAL LEISURE

A. An Introduction to Local and Non-Local Leisure

Building on the previous discussion, this chapter seeks to explore how local and non-local leisure intersect the complex phenomenon of sense of place. Keeping in mind the previous discussions of private and public space, rural and urban space, and long- and short-term residency in place, this chapter will examine leisure that occurs locally and leisure experienced in a non-local environment. Many respondents expressed a "leisure or travel" related place when discussing places that were important to them. Corresponding research in the planning and management field and leisure and tourism studies supports leisure activity as an important element of place identity and attachment (Williams et al, 1992). This characteristic of leisure and travel raised questions surrounding participation and experience in leisure and tourism and the corresponding relationship to place. It is with this in mind, that the following discussion will explore how selected residents of Strathcona County articulate sense of place within a local and non-local leisure and context.

This chapter is structured into the binary opposition of leisure in local and non-local settings, or more explicitly, home and away. Again, these binary oppositions are not meant to reinforce the traditional notions of these concepts. On the contrary, the binaries are used to structure the argument in order to expose the middle ground for discussion. Disrupting or blurring rigid notions of leisure and travel can open up new perspectives. Likewise, in analysing the interviews, diverse and rich leisure experiences related to place were discussed. To understand these notions, the approach must be fluid and flexible enough to entertain a variety of differing notions and understandings, enabling a broad analysis of people and place relationships. To begin with, a brief discussion of leisure will be presented, focussing on social relationships in leisure places. The discussion leads into a commentary on the absence of public leisure space in Strathcona County and Sherwood Park. Following a discussion of local leisure places in Strathcona County, non-local leisure behaviour will be examined as it relates to how the selected respondents articulate leisure experiences in relation to sense of place. A discussion of tourism, specifically, will ground the analysis. And finally, conclusions will be drawn about the nature of local and non-local leisure places in relation to sense of place as articulated by selected residents of Strathcona County.

B. Locally Based Leisure

As research in leisure studies has shown, leisure involves elements of intrinsic reward and freedom (de Grazia, 1962; Neulinger, 1974). Leisure is an activity or experience based on the notion of the self in relation to something that is fulfilling and important for personal growth and discovery (Iso-Ahola, 1979). However, notions of leisure can not be relegated to the idea of self-betterment alone. There are many leisure activities and experiences that do not necessarily connote positive use of free time. Hence, the importance of leisure as a freely chosen activity emphasising autonomy in decision making. This too can be debatable, as there are many social and cultural structural constraints that can impede the element of free choice in leisure (Jackson &

Scott, 1999). Therefore, in many ways leisure signifies the idea of privilege. Privilege to have the time, money, and ability to participate in chosen activities, but also, privilege to be able to overcome many of the social and cultural barriers to experiencing leisure.

Having said that, leisure and travel have become almost universally accepted activities in our society, as leisure time is built into the idea of work through holiday time and weekends (Rybczynski, 1991). The notion that people work so that they can have time off to recreate is one that is prevalent in conceptualisations of work and leisure. There may not be more leisure time, but there is no doubt that the development of time off from work (and other elements, such as, disposable income) has caused a redistribution of leisure time (Rybczynski, 1991). The sanctioned time off work allows for institutionalized leisure time and, often it is in time that the self and community are felt most acutely. It is no coincidence that many people involved in this study would equate their sense of place with important leisure activities and places in their lives. In fact there are many parallels between the notions of leisure and sense of place. Respondents report feelings of well-being and comfort when describing a feeling of sense of place in much the same way they discussed the importance of leisure in daily life experience. The following respondent discusses the relationship between a leisure-based activity, football, and the corresponding relationship to the place, the football field.

> The actual football field is a spiritual thing for me. I could give you a list, from the very first time I played all the fields I played on. I could actually list every single practice facility and playing

> field that I ever set foot on. Obviously, it is very important to me. Clarke Stadium and Commonwealth symbolize to me a wonderful game, something that I love very much and something that provided a lot of enjoyment and opportunity. I was able to achieve a lot of things and do a lot of things on the field because I could play football. New avenues and important relationships opened up to me because of those experiences. Edmonton and the places in the city that I identify with are the stadiums and the people in them--both in fantasy and reality.

The above quote expresses the powerful nature of important places connected to leisure experiences. The places in which social relationships are formed, through the common bond of a leisure activity and experience, become memorable and lasting influences in the lived experience. As this respondent comments, the experience of leisure and place imprints both "imagined" and "real" conceptions of interaction in place.

a) Leisure and place relationships at home

Individual and social relationships, inside and outside of leisure, are affected by "life" in the broader context. Leisure does not occur as an entity unto itself; individuals have multiple ties across varied social and other life commitments. Scott and Godbey (1992) comment that groups should be conceived of as social worlds that are linked to broader social systems. People have social histories and leisure experiences are engaged within multiple social formations. Stokowski (1994) says that it is these structured interpersonal and community relationships that provide the foundation and coherence for individual and social leisure behaviour.

Furthermore, Stokowski (1994) writes that leisure does not just happen randomly. Indeed it is found in recreation events and sporting teams, but it is also found in the context of daily life.

> We get so many birds out here. And instantly, when we put the food out this week a whole bunch birds came that we hadn't even seen and I had been sick for the last several days and we just sat at the window here and waited for the birds. People would ask, "What did you do?" Well, we just sat here and watched all the birds for the whole day. Sounds kind of crazy.

Samdahl (1992) discusses informal unstructured situations that emerge from daily life into common leisure occasions. In this way, leisure is seen as an emergent experience in an individual's life or part of their daily life. Samdahl proposes that informal social interaction allows the presentation of one's "true self", contributing to a more complete understanding of leisure behaviour. The idea of sitting in front of a window all day watching birds is an example of a leisure experience that is informal and impromptu, but important enough to engage the participant for long periods of time. It is evident that this experience is also intimately tied to the place. It is within the comfort of the home setting that this kind of informal and intimate leisure experience is possible.

It is also probably one of those defining moments that mark a place in the home as being special. It is special because of the birds, but also special because of time spent with others participating in the activity of bird watching.

b) Leisure, place relationships, and social theory

In discussing issues of leisure and social relationships, Stokowski (1994) questions how social structure enters into leisure behaviour and meaning. The following is a brief explanation based on Stokowski's theory of structuration and leisure behaviour. According to Stokowski, social structure research attempts to explain the patterning of individual and group interactions across other social systems. There is a direct relationship with individual agency and how the agent or individual negotiates social space. Social interaction is a result of individual behaviour or intention in a setting or context. Structural research examines the relational patterns resulting from intentional and unintentional action in an effort to predict how the arrangement of elements within and across social systems influences the behaviours of contributing social actors (Stokowski, 1994). The theory of social structuration is particularly interesting in the context of sense of place in that it acknowledges social space as being an important indicator of leisure experience. Furthermore, the theory spatializes leisure in a way that disrupts the tendency to situate leisure as being a temporal phenomenon only. The fact that leisure occurs in spaces integral to the experience opens up new ways of exploring both leisure and sense of place. The following quotation discusses football in comparison to family.

> Football definitely represents family. The first thing that comes to mind to me is college football. I started college not knowing a soul, but then there was football. The guys are like a surrogate family.

This respondent's comment about football shows how it came to be understood as being like a "family" because of the experience of the social unit of the family in the home place. We come to know family as a social unit because of our individual participation within that particular social setting. In the case of this respondent's experience with football, the responsibility in playing goes beyond the individual level but is intimately tied to individual action in a social space, whether that be the football locker room or the football field. Players are aware of the broader context of the game in order to "protect" their fellow players on the football field. By showing a level of competency in skill level and recognising the team as something more than a social gathering for the purposes of sport. Similar to discussions of the home, other places can act as surrogate home places and be no less memorable or important in life experience.

McCall and Simmons (1978) define relationships as the linkage between two or more social actors who may be individual, groups, or larger collectivities. Social relationships have been discussed at length in this thesis to emphasise the profound influence that important places have on people and their social relationships. As many scholars have identified, there is no such thing as a single leisure relationship. Rather, people are involved in many relationships at once that cross over and intersect leisure activity and behaviour (Stokowski, 1994).

The following quotation attempts to conceptualise the importance of close "family-like" relationships as contributing to personal growth and development in leisure experiences. He discusses important "life" skills such as hard work and teamwork. Skill development and esteem building related to leisure activity are intimately tied to place in which they are fostered and encouraged.

> I wasn't really a strong student and I wasn't a great athlete. I understood that, but I know what senior football did for me. It taught me structure, it taught me that hard work will always pay off, and it taught me that I could be part of the team. And I could be successful. I was not one of those kids that had any self-esteem in high school at all. I had none. And you look at me now, and people don't even recognise me, they're like 'He's doing that?', then they talk to me and they're like, 'Holy smokes, you changed. And I see that as a compliment. But, that's what it did for me. All I know is, I was a late bloomer, and I've started to come out a little bit and I think football and the team had something to do with that.

Hoggett and Bishop (1985) suggest a need to look at the voluntary sector of leisure involvement more closely. Individuals build meaningful communal affiliations through clubs, groups, and informal associations. Leisure appears to be an important social bonding time, reinforcing both the people involved and the place in which it occurs.

The following respondent discusses the role of the footfall coach in a voluntary capacity.

> Football--I don't know if it has to do with community as much as the type of bonding that that particular sport brings. I feel a 'sense of place' or comfort or safety in the game of football. I think it's safe to say that you're more than a football coach. It's interesting though, how that sense of team and feeling responsibility to and for other people can create that bond.

In the previous quotation the respondent discusses participation as a football coach and again makes reference to important "life" experiences such as feeling a sense of responsibility to and for other people. He alludes to the important role that coaches play as leaders and models for young people.

In the following quotation the respondent refers to participation in informal sporting leagues and discusses the importance of the locker room as being a significant gathering place for the group. A location where "you can be who you want to be" and "anything goes." It is a location of perceived freedom and individual expression in a social context.

> Anything goes in the locker room. It is one of the few places where you can be who you want to be. For some people it takes about sixty years before they let out who they are. But in the locker room anything goes.

Stokowski (1994) identifies that the understanding of leisure experiences as socially constructed realities developing within the interpersonal relationships of daily life is missing from traditional conceptualisations of leisure. Arguably, the same could be said about people-place relationships in that there is a tendency to compartmentalize sense of place into sets of different relationships and not emphasise the interrelatedness of these relationships enough. Stokowski goes on to say that such relationships are the source of leisure behaviours and meanings and that they are necessarily patterned across multiple social instances. It is the interplay of multiple levels of social order and multiple processes of social organisation, which provide structure to leisure behaviours and meanings (Stokowski). Again, the idea that people-place relationships may go through the same experiential process is one way to further spatialize leisure in social contexts, opening up new ways of exploring sense of place.

Giddens (1990) proposes that social theorizing must begin from the premise that human agency is intimately bound to the structuring process of social systems and further, that all structuring processes must be conceived against a background of time and space. This process of analysis involves including time and space as more than just environments, but as being integral to social relations. Furthermore, Giddens proposes that with renewed attention to the interdependence of structuration processes with the contextual nature of social interaction taken into account could potentially give a more rich and insightful discussion of human social interaction.

> *The co-ordination of the daily paths of individual within given range of locales, plus what some researchers have called a "sense of place" are concretised aspects of the duality of structure...the continuity of the biography of the individual is expressed in, and also expresses, the continuity of institutional reproductions.*
>
> *Giddens, 1990*

He goes on to say that a more comprehensive understanding of how aspects of place affect the production of systems of social practice may give further insight into the field of leisure studies. Space is not "empty"; it is always social and intimately tied into the reproduction of social structures.

c) Leisure and place relationships – Public leisure in Sherwood Park

Having touched on this discussion earlier in the thesis, the purpose of this section is to explore public space with specific reference to leisure activity and experience. One of the most apparent inconsistencies in interpreting sense of place for people of Strathcona County was the prevalence of highly controlled leisure activities and experiences especially those located around the home place. Compared to the "good old days" of times past, parents are less willing to let their children outside for extended periods of time unsupervised. In many cases, women interviewed were reluctant to be outside alone after dark. Respondents were nostalgic for the times when it was safe to be outside after dark and you did not have to lock your doors. These findings were inconsistent with earlier discussions that seemed to reify the overwhelming feeling that the suburb was a safe place. This contradiction affirms the idea that the safety of the suburb is a myth. However, the myth is powerful and influential and it works in the psyche in predictable ways. In a community, like Sherwood Park, there is a perceived need to have shared understandings about what "our" place is like. So if suburbia could potentially be a "dangerous" place and the idea of the suburb as a "safe place" is a myth, then are we living in some kind of increasing state of paranoia? This is difficult to say, but the tension is clearly played out with respect to leisure behaviour and participation in Strathcona County.

Overall, leisure behaviour in public space seemed to be very controlled. This was the case even for children, for whom the element" of "free play" is so important. It seemed significant for parents to encourage leisure participation, yet in a very rationalized way. The need to rationalize play and leisure is not new. In fact, some scholars have called this phenomena the "McDonaldization" of society (Ritzer, 1996). Efficiency, rationality, and predictability reflect the need to seek control in an increasingly fast-paced world. These elements seem to be strong influences in leisure behaviour as well, particularly in the public realm of leisure places.

Furthermore, it appears that important public leisure spaces in Sherwood Park are connected to a highly structured leisure experience, such as participation in team sports with strongly enforced rules and regulations. The following quotation reflects the prevalence of families and communities almost being conditioned as to ways in which leisure time is experienced in the public realm.

> I think about sense of place when I drive by the fields and there's a bunch of guys playing soccer. I almost feel like stopping and staying there for a while. Because our boys were in soccer,

> football, and so on, and I coached a fair amount. So, those places have kind of a sense of place for me. You know when I drive home from work now, about six o'clock, I drive by the Salisbury fields and I see all the teams out there, and I think I used to have time to coach, and now it's six o'clock. You know I used to rush home at five or whatever time it would be and have supper and away we go.

Oldenburg (1997) suggests that we have lost casual gathering places that used to make social leisure more spontaneous and less controlled. These places seemed to be relatively rare in Sherwood Park. If there are public places, they were not discussed as having any importance to the respondent's sense of place. Historically, these kinds of leisure spaces, what Oldenburg (1997) and Soja (1996) call "third spaces" have been very meaningful and important. Cafes, taverns, the corner store and other similar establishments, examples of "third spaces", are particularly absent from the suburban cultural landscape. Third space can be defined as place settings that are a physical manifestation of people's desire to associate with other people in an area once they become familiar with the people and the place (Oldenburg, 1997). Third spaces are the core settings of informal public life. They are regular, voluntary, and informal gathering of people in places in their community, beyond the realms of work and home. Oldenburg identifies the "first" place as the home place and the "second" place as the work place. Industrialisation, urbanisation, and advances in technology have all led to a decline of community reliance on third spaces. Oldenburg comments that urban and suburban areas are planned accordingly to reflect division between public and private life. Segregation, isolation, compartmentalisation, and sterilisation seem to be guiding principles of planning community spaces (Oldenburg). However, in a society driven by convenience, it is ironic that even if third places were present in the cultural landscape, it is unlikely anyone would have time to enjoy them.

During and after my interviews were completed, I spent time in Sherwood Park, driving and walking around, trying to pin-point the places that people talked about. It was interesting to me that aside for the Salisbury field mentioned in the quotation above regarding the soccer fields; other public space was not mentioned. There are coffee shops, local taverns and restaurants and the like in Sherwood Park and Strathcona County has ample outdoor recreation opportunities, but they were not discussed as being important leisure places.

One of the apparent inconsistencies in Sherwood Park in particular is a beautifully constructed theatre facility in the middle of the hamlet. Festival Place, apart from being a world-class theatre space, also has an informal lobby/meeting space and other features conducive to local gathering. It is landscaped with a circuitous trail system through open parkland. There are ornate bridges that cross the artificial lake that doubles for a skating rink in the winter. I was particularly interested in this development when it began years ago. I remember thinking how fortunate the community of Sherwood Park was to have such a place. Indeed, the space is recognised as being important beyond the community of Sherwood Park by theatre professionals and enthusiasts. It was curious that this place was not mentioned at all by the people in this study. In the centre of the community, a place where most people drive by everyday was not mentioned as being integral to the public leisure space of the community. Festival Place is only one example of a public leisure space in Strathcona County. The reader may remember in the description of Strathcona County with its abundance of public leisure spaces, particularly natural areas such as Elk Island National Park, The Ministik Bird Sanctuary, and the Strathcona Wilderness Centre. None of these areas were mentioned as being important to the sense of place of the people interviewed for this study. This section has attempted to question this absence and determine the ways in which public space relates to leisure and sense of place. It is apparent, that particularly in the area of leisure studies, that this phenomenon deserves further research.

Edward Soja (1996) suggests that there is necessarily a "third space" in lived experience. Places are concrete and places are imagined, but there is something else. Not to be confused with public space, "third space" a way of thinking differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent spatiality of human life.

C. Tourism

Among other things, the notion of travel connotes a broadening of the mind, a kind of education in culture and place. Perspective is gained by gazing from a distance. And, difference can be insightful and educational. For many people, the desire to travel is fuelled by the need for fun and exciting experiences in relaxing places. However, travel can also be confusing and the idea of distance can be based on illusion or myth. As Kaplan (1996) says, with regards to travel, "difference depends on your point of view".

When I taught the tourism class at the University of Alberta, many of the students remark, "I thought this class was supposed to fun" and "I am not sure whether I want to travel anymore now". The perception is that travel and tourism are "fun" and relatively apolitical. There is the notion that travel is free from social and cultural consequences. Often, the greatest learning occurs when students make the connection between their actions as travellers and the resultant impacts on the social, cultural, and environmental fabrics of the communities travelled upon. My point in giving a critical perspective in the class is not to thwart student travel, but to raise important questions about leisure and travel in our society. Many times Kaplan's (1996) question of "How do we reconcile travel within destabilizing nation states, cultural and economic diasporas, and increasing disparities of wealth and power?" has influenced my perspective of thinking about and teaching tourism. Contemporary culture presupposes that travel is a necessary element of work and play. We travel for friends and family, and in many cases will leave friends and family to capitalize on career opportunities. We have the freedom to travel in and for these capacities. However, it is necessary to be aware of the ways in which travel and the ability to travel affect the construction of places and the people in place. This chapter will look at tourism in an increasingly global world and some associated issues with reference to respondent's comments of travel places in relation to their sense of place.

The search for a place in which happiness may be found is a metaphor for the search to uncover a memory of happiness (Curtis and Pajaczkowski, 1994). These interviews were especially interesting in that people expressed much of their sense of place in relation to travel. The physical process of movement and the disruption and dynamic quality of negotiating different place experiences imprints itself on the memory in profound ways. However, knowing you can return home is even more telling of the process of travelling and the construction of home. The "trip" represents a lapse in the regular rhythms of existence and leads to a place where time almost stands still or is reversed (Curtis & Pajaczkowski). The sense of place and time in travel seems to be different than in daily life experience. It is not a utopian space of freedom and transparency, but a place where we actively engage in behaviour that is unlike the "norm".

The term tourist is derived from the word "tour", meaning a journey at which one returns to the starting point, a circular trip usually for business, pleasure, or education, during which various places are visited and for which an itinerary is usually planned (Gilbert, 1990). This definition highlights that tourists have a variety of motivations for travel. Gilbert, provides the following definition which encapsulates the nature of tourism: "Tourism is a component of recreation which involves travel to a less familiar destination or community, for a short period of time, in order to satisfy a consumer need for one or a combination of activities" (p. 25). This definition includes both tourist motivation and the notion that the tourist and destination are part of a larger system. However, this definition fails to include the extremely personal and social nature of travel. The following quotation from a respondent highlights the nature of these personal and social relationships.

> When we were in Penticton together I saw him as him. He was wild and crazy and funny and we met another friend down there who is the most dynamic person I know. He's crazy. Anyway, we just had a great time. It was like we were in high school

> again, before all the responsibility and all the relationships come into it. Now I'm just as bad or worse than my friends because I hardly see them anymore.

The previous quote discusses travel with friends and how sometimes when travelling the "guard" is let down a little, and people feel freer to be who they "really are".

Like wise, the following quote discusses a family bonding experience that occurred in Las Vegas. The preconceived idea of a place like Las Vegas is that it is the type of place that would not necessarily be conducive to forming and affirming important social relationships. However, this again points to the extremely malleable nature of place and social relationships. This example also points to the perspective that distance can have on relationships. The notion of "getting away from it all" can be an influential factor in travel.

> One of the best vacations I ever had was when we went to Las Vegas last summer. It was just after my grandmother died and it was just kind of a way to release the stress afterwards. I went with my parents and my sister, it was just really cool and we had such a great time. And then my friend came down and met me there, and it drove me nuts. But, it was a new thing for us because I was always close to my parents but I was never close to my sister. And I think that was the turning point for us. And, now we're very close. So I think that, that's why the vacation

> was so great. The place was exciting; it's an exciting place to go. But, just getting away, putting that part of our life behind us, and getting closer to the family, is what I really liked about the trip. And I was almost insulted that my friend kind of invaded that. For four days. That's all it was, it was four days. But it was good to get away.

The physical act of moving has a profound affect on how people discussed their sense of place. The car symbolized a way to view the outside from a distance. The private space of the car represents freedom to control the travel experience. It acts a safe place in which to mediate experiences of difference. The automobile is under the control of the driver and the driver can decide when to stop and start. By doing this, they can partially control the gaze of the travel experience.

> The reason I said our sense of place is in our vehicles is because we like to go for drives. Last Friday, we left here, down to Red Deer and on the David Thompson highway, all through to Jasper, and then back. It's a day trip. We could do whatever we wanted, stop when we wanted or just keep going. We certainly have a sense of well being just driving along through the country. We will take a big lunch and stop along the way. I think the best thing about travel is when you go someplace you're usually coming back to a home place. That's actually one of the nicest things about going away.

The previous quotation is a discussion of the profound relationship between travel and the home place. It is nice to travel because you can return home. The following quotation touches on the physical act of moving and also comments on how the mode of transportation can have an impact on experiences and be an element of sense of place.

> Every second year, we go out to Victoria for Christmas. All my five sibling's immediate families go out there. We drive out there—it is part of the fun of the trip. The kids have all the places they like to stop along the way.

a) Tourism and place relationships in a broader context

Tourism involves the movement of people from one location to another outside of their own community (Gilbert, 1990). Locations become tourist destinations offering a wide range of activities, experiences, and facilities. In many respects, tourism is about the geography of consumption outside the home area; it is about how and why people travel to consume, whether it be historic buildings, landscapes, art and museum collections, or sports and entertainment (Law, 1993). Issues surrounding the commodification of leisure and tourism experiences need to be addressed with respect to the cultural consumption of place. As Craik (1995) argues, the most significant impediments to tourism may be cultural and goes on to say that economic, environmental, and political issues should be placed within the broader cultural context of tourism.

Certain places and sites, with their landscapes, social practices, buildings, residents, symbols and meaning achieve the status of tourist sites because of their physical, social, cultural and commercial attributes (Britton, 1991). The capitalist nature of place is illuminated when these distinct spaces are organized in such a way as to represent and constitute the commodification and consumption of place. In this way, place becomes a site for consumptive purposes, but also a commodity itself, in the form of property value and worth. The selling of place provides compelling economic realities and directly influences the nature of place and place experiences. The concept of sense of place is necessarily affected by the increasingly prevalent nature of commodified places. In order to understand this relationship more fully, an examination of commodified places as tourism destinations will be useful to solidify the argument.

Tourism can only be understood within the changing economic, social, and physical structures of particular environments. With the economic decline of traditional economies, tourism appears to be the popular replacement industry to encourage economic stimulation. As the move to viewing places as tourist attractions becomes more widespread, destinations around the world have developed accordingly. Furthermore, in order to stay competitive in an extremely market driven economy, places have had to find new ways to generate capital investment and to foster an economic environment that will attract and encourage growth.

Britton (1991) outlines how places are assimilated into the production of tourism commodities. The industry contrives to impart meanings to its products by associating them with attributes of non-commercially created attractions, which of necessity, also means imparting meaning to specific places and sites (Britton). Non-commercially created attractions or non-tourism derived commercial attractions take on new meanings promoted as a tourism product. As commercial notions of place become increasingly prevalent, the meanings associated with place also change. This implicates experience in place and also the nature of the place itself.

Jameson (1991) discusses the notion of postmodern hyperspace as transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself or to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually and cognitively to map its position in a "mappable" external world. This implies a separation between the body and the built environment, but, also, the difficulty in actually located ourselves in the place. Jameson further discusses the incapacity of our minds to map the great global multinational and de-centred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects. Globalization is the organisation of production and the exploitation of markets on a world scale (Robins, 1991). There is an emphasis on a global concentration of industrial and financial capital that serves to create notions of place as being "global". The result is the development of built space that reflects multinational capital and enterprise, confounding the distance between "centre" and "periphery" cultures.

Marginal places, those places, which have been left behind in the modern race for progress evoke both nostalgia and fascination (Shields, 1991). Their marginal status may come from out of the way geographic locations, being the site of illicit or disdained social activities, or represent the location of the "Other". Marginal places are characterized by being placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space, in which places are ranked relative to each other. There is an image or stigma associated with these places because they are "mapped" in relation to places of centrality. This implies a system of social spatialization that is different from the dominant discourse. Essentially, marginal places are the categorisation of geographic places on the basis of cultural distinction, which is in turn, understood as being "different". As Shields makes clear, as opposed to being merely a topographic margin, the development of cultural marginality occurs through a complex process of social activity and cultural work. As the following quotation suggests, nostalgia and mythology commonly associated with travel can produce notions of "difference".

> I saw a real cowboy in a store. He had a scarf around his neck and everything. And then we went to the next town down the road and had supper in the bowling alley - a sandwich and a steak, and the dessert was a German chocolate pie. Oh my gosh! And if you walk down the street in Twin Bridges, everyone says hello. They are just wonderful.

The quest for authenticity is central to understanding the culture of tourism, but it is also interesting in coming to know and understand places intimately. An authentic experience refers to somehow gaining access to the truth about something. Tourism, which emerged with this search for authenticity, is based in the belief that authenticity and reality are elsewhere; in other historical periods, in other cultures, and in purer and simpler lifestyles (MacCannell, 1976). As the above quotation implies, the respondent was thrilled to see a "real" cowboy.

The development of the constructed tourist attraction results from how those who are subject to the tourist gaze respond, both to protect themselves from intrusions into their lives "backstage" and to take advantage of the opportunities it presents for profitable investment (Urry, 1990). Thus, once something becomes a tourist attraction, authenticity is an impossible endeavour. Places are created as "attractions" and are often not at all reflective of the lives of the local community and host population. Tourism is the product of consumer culture, leisure, and technological innovation (Kaplan, 1996). Many places, around the world, have been quick to develop and create tourist destinations in order to capitalize on economic growth opportunities. However, as Craik (1991) argues, the basis of tourism is too narrow, and largely ignores social, cultural, environmental, labour, and structural determinants and impacts on place.

> When I think of Maple Creek, I think of the Cinnamon buns. Curly's Bakery. Really good people. All the ranchers are in there having coffee. It's just a great place, I just love it. We went last week to have buns at Curly's Bakery. We drove all the way to Medicine Hat and then we drove to Maple Creek. Then after Maple Creek we came home. They got this really old hotel there. Such a sense of history in that place. You feel that you are in a dream. It is really enjoyable-- so unlike what we experience everyday.

The previous quote refers to a respondent's experience of a small town in Alberta. Maple Creek is "othered" because it is different and also taken to be authentic but in a dreamlike way. In many cases, the good life means a traditional way of life, nostalgia for times gone by and the golden days. Small town life is frequently called upon to represent these images and gives a feeling of going back in time when things were better, safer, and more comfortable--a "real" feeling of community. The following quote depicts another experience of small town life in a travel experience. The place is what is termed as quaint. However, as the respondent notes, the fact that the place has been consciously developed around a theme is explicitly recognised. In this way, the tourist acknowledges the destinations as being based on a theme, yet representative of an authentic ideal. Therefore, the idea of sense of place as being "one" thing that is true and unique to that particular place is confounded.

> It's like every time we go down south we stop in the Acadia Valley. Well the first time that we went back we went to the teahouse in the elevator. That's what their sort of theme is to get people to come in. They turned a grain elevator into a teahouse.

Often it is the recognised "difference" of the local population and its culture that is the major attraction. Ethnic and cultural tourism are based on the promotion of cultural understanding and cultural exchange. However, it is argued that the brief encounters of tourists with local cultures serves to reinforce ethnocentrism and, convince tourists of developed countries, of the correctness of their own worldviews. Stereotypic beliefs are too strong and tourist encounters are too short (Laxson, 1991). Furthermore, as Kaplan (1996) argues, if the tourist traverses boundaries, they are boundaries that the tourist participates in creating. The distinction between the tourist and the "other" merely serves to reinforce economic and social structures that reflect centres and margins. In this way, the tourist participates in creating new versions of hegemonic relations producing eurocentrisms and other forms of cultural domination (Kaplan). This notion highlights the fact the places and interaction in spaces are inherently politicised. Sense of place is a notion that can not be divorced from social, cultural and political relationships.

The journey and the destination are often described as a passage through symbolic time, forward towards a resolution of conflict and backwards towards a lost aspect of the past (Curtis & Pajaczkowska, 1994). There is a sense that a different place is one in which time operates at a slower place. There is a sense of discovery and interest, but not necessarily of belonging. It is a way of acting as a voyeur or vicarious participation in the activities of another time and place.

Curtis and Pajaczkowski (1994) ask the question what does travel produce if not, by a sort of reversal, an exploration of the deserted places of memory and the return to nearby exoticism by way of a detour through distant places, and the discovery of relics and legends. These authors are proposing that travel be undertaken to restore something that is missing in life. The outer journey of physical and spatial mobility can function as a metaphor for the interior journey of the soul, mind, and consciousness (Curtis & Pajaczkowski). The say further to this thought, that if travelling implies a journey of metamorphosis and transformation in which the self is changed by the experience of alterity encountered in a dialectic of difference, then tourism implies circular confirmation of self-identity (Curtis & Pajaczkowski, 1994). This refers to the point made earlier that people are compelled by places that elicit feelings of comfort and well-being. To have a sense of place confirms who we are or who we think we are, rather than challenges notions of identity.

Tourism can be a homogenising influence and its effects everywhere seem to be the same. The local and regional landscape that very often initiate the desire to travel or to create a tourism destination, is destroyed and replaced by conventional tourist architecture, synthetic landscapes and pseudo places (Relph, 1976). The result is the creation of homogenous environments in which there is very little distinction between places, regardless of the distance that separates them. A placeless geography develops and is characterized by areas that lack both diverse landscapes and significant aspects that contribute to the inherent uniqueness of places (Relph, 1976). Relph would argue that it is this placelessness that contributes to alienation of humans from their environments and would not be conducive to creating an environment to foster positive feelings of sense of place. As the following quotation from a respondent suggests, an increasingly homogenous environment can seem "out of place", regardless of how familiar the cultural artefact or landmark is. The quotation is a good example of increasingly global formations of place and place identity.

> I didn't expect to see a Subway in Mexico. I guess I thought we would see a lot of things but not that. And yet on the other hand it is not really surprising I guess, just weird, out of place maybe.

D. Summary of Discussion

Travel, in both its metaphorical and physical reaches can no longer be considered as something that confirms of our initial departure, and thus concludes in a confirmation of a domestication of difference (Chambers, 1994). Likewise, sense of place can not be solely based on the idea of places as having a uniqueness and difference that sets them apart from other places. Arguably, places in contemporary society are much more complicated and difficult to conceptualise. Add to this, social relations in space, and it is easy to see why a historical imagination is favoured over a geographical imagination. Again, this chapter is exploratory, but identifies that need for further conceptualisation of human interaction in spatial realities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

A. Reflections on Content and Process

The conclusion will provide a general overview of the study findings and offer summarising comments. Firstly, the purpose of the study will be revisited followed by reflection on the literature review. The methodology will be discussed, providing reflection on the use of qualitative methods and in-depth interviews. This section will also address how the study changed over the course of analysis and writing. Summarising comments of the content will be presented, as they are broken down into the four chapters: public and private space; urban and rural; short- and long-term; and leisure and travel. This section will be followed by prospects for further research and study of the concept of sense of place. Finally, the thesis will conclude with the author's personal journey revisited, as well as, some concluding comments on sense of place.

This study focused on the sense of place of residents of Strathcona County, Alberta. The research asked the question: How do selected residents of Strathcona County articulate their views on sense of place is general and in relation to Strathcona County in particular? In-depth interviews were used to ask the questions and the overall study was framed by a hermeneutical and interpretative research paradigm. There was an attempt to organize the study sample in the following way: three short-term urban residents, three long-term urban residents, three short-term rural residents, and three long-term rural residents.

The overall goal of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of sense of place to selected residents of Strathcona County.

The literature review reflected various definitions and meanings associated with sense of place. Williams and Stuart (1998) outlined sense of place as the following:

- the emotional bonds that people have with places (at various geographic scales) over time and with familiarity with those places;
- the strongly felt values, meanings, and symbols that are hard to identify or know (and hard to quantify);
- the valued qualities of a place that even an insider may not be consciously aware of until they are threatened or lost;
- the set of place meanings that are actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed within individual minds, shared cultures, and social practices; and
- the awareness of the cultural, historical, and spatial context within which meanings, values, and social, interactions are formed.

The review followed with a general discussion of place to a more specific analysis of sense of place. The literature review highlighted the socio-cultural perspective inherent in people-landscape relationships. The literature review raised the question of whether or not the theories of planning and management reflected the depth of the term sense of place and warned against joining the sense of place parade (Williams & Stuart, 1998) without fully recognising the breadth of the concept. To adequately reflect the breadth and depth of the term, sense of place definitions and frameworks should reflect plurality and inclusiveness. The literature review reflected sense of place as a term that blurs boundaries and crosses over commonly accepted constructs and ways of viewing the world. New literature was introduced in the analysis section of the thesis document in order to adequately respond to emergent thematic patterns. It was the intersection and overlap of the literature that was important to this study. Sense of place means affective relationships between people and place, however, if social and cultural processes are fully examined, sense of place means more. The goal of this research was to employ a multidisciplinary approach in order to intertwine some of the concepts used in the management literature with theories in cultural geography that focus on the multiplicity of meanings associated with understanding individual, social, and cultural place relationships. Arguably, "sense of place" requires more research and analysis. Hence, this research project was exploratory, reflecting a general inquiry into "what is sense of place" and more specifically, the question "what is the sense of place to the people of Strathcona County."

B. Methodology Revisited

The study was based on the exploratory nature of the interpretive hermeneutical framework. For the study of sense of place, the choice of methodology reflected the need to uncover rich and detailed information. In-depth interview methods guided the data collection to facilitate a meaningful dialogue about place meanings. The conversation approach used in the interviews allowed for opportunities to learn about experiences, feelings, and meanings related to place and sense of place. By focussing on twelve research subjects, it was possible to investigate people and place relationships in some depth on an individual basis. The interview began with broad place-related questions and then the discussion focused on Strathcona County and natural places specifically.

In retrospect, there are aspects of the thesis that could be done differently. Sample size, the transcription process, the use of a personal journal, NUDIST, and the number of respondents will be discussed in detail. Selecting the sample was not as straightforward a process as was outlined in the thesis proposal. Upon taking the proposed research to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, it was determined that a traditional snowball method of sampling was not compliant with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. In order to continue with sample selection and to be compliant with the Act, the sample was determined through word-of-mouth. Rather than directly contacting suggested respondents, a synopsis of the study was faxed to a few people and then they were given the responsibility to contact other potential respondents who could then contact the researcher if they were willing to participate. At first, it was thought this development would prolong the research. However, people did call and I was able to schedule interviews and from there the study grew. As with any study, there were some set backs as interviews had to be rescheduled or cancelled. However, the data collection and transcription was completed within the four-month scheduled time period.

The transcription portion of the analysis was a far more important step than previously thought. Attention to detail in the transcribing is important, but it is also important to review the interview on the tape after the interview was completed. This portion of the research process, although time consuming, was crucial to trigger thoughts and act as a catalyst for data analysis. Along with the transcriptions, the personal journal that was kept during the process was crucial. It allowed the researcher to keep track of emerging themes and comment on particularly important elements as they came to the forefront. It also allowed for documentation of respondent contact that was not recorded, such as, tours of the house and yard, and other comments that were not recorded on the transcription tape. The journal also allowed the researcher to write personal comments in relation to sense of place that culminated in the personal journey portion of the thesis. As a tool for qualitative data analysis, the journal allowed me to check my bias and continually contextualize myself within the body of work. Being reflective of researcher bias is perhaps the most challenging component of qualitative analysis. The notion that qualitative analysis is value laden is readily acknowledged, therefore, it was important to be reflective of these feelings throughout the study. I accomplished this through free flow journal writing, along with more formal participant observation type journal entries. The free flow journal writing allowed me to write in a more uninhibited and free manner. I then went back over my own notes repeatedly to look for patterns and themes in my own thinking. Again, a time consuming and involved process, but one which was necessary for me to feel comfortable with my interpretation of respondent comments.

The data analysis involved a number of different steps, all crucial to the analysis of the data. The specific steps are outlined in the methodology section of the thesis in Chapter Three. However, the following comments are reflections on the data analysis portion of the thesis. The data analysis began upon completion of the interviews with personal journal entries and the transcription process. NUDIST was utilised to organize the data in the beginning of analysis. However, as the interviews were completed, and the analysis progressed, I preferred working with the data in a more "tangible" way. For instance, I began cutting and pasting the interview material into word documents and created posters categorizing interview material into themes. I think it was easier for me work with the data in this "hand on" fashion and to follow the Seven Canons of Hermeneutical Research and the Hermeneutical Circle (See Chapter Three). One drawback with qualitative methods is the challenge of managing large amounts of data. In the end, I had approximately 500 hundred pages of transcribed interviews. Concurrently, because of the conversation style employed in the in-depth interview technique, the data was very unstructured. Each word and line required the same amount of attention in order to perform a rigorous analysis. In reflecting on the data collection and analysis, I think I would have preferred to interview fewer subjects, but go into more detail with each particular interview. There was a need to determine the primary and emergent themes and to delve into each of them. The purpose of the research was not to generalize; hence, a detailed discussion about each theme is presented. The process was time consuming, but necessary. It allowed me to become intimate with the responses and also reflect considerably on each interview.

To analyse the data and eventually write about it, I needed to adapt a framework for discussion. I chose to use binary oppositions for a number of reasons. First of all, the binary represents the traditional and as well as the "modern" approach to science. I wanted to discuss this, but also make the case for alternative approaches to "knowing" science. The binary offers a firm oppositional framework that can be "set up" to expose some of the gaps that exist in this kind of organisational framework. Secondly, in many cases, respondents talked about something in relation to what it was not. Therefore, the binary allowed me to categorize responses, and then work, in my interpretation to expose the middle-ground, with the goal of placing these ideas on a continuum. Finally, the when ideas are set in opposition, one concept always has a privileged position. It was my goal to de-centre the privilege and raise discussion on these key points. As Derrida (1976) writes, it is a way to expose, reverse, and dismantle binaries and their hierarchies of value.

In looking at sense of place specifically, in the literature, it often seems to be quantified, in terms of landscape attributes and preferences. Alternatively, sense of place is seen to be a "mystical" concept that is difficult to explain because it is spiritual and otherworldly. I wanted to make the case that sense of place is not just these things, and that if looked at narrowly in this way, only some elements are explained about the ways in which places are experienced in lived experience. Instead, I wanted to locate sense of place as a concept of lived experience that is personal and collective. As a phenomenon that has definite implications in the way the spatial world is organized and that is constantly produced and reproduced through social interaction in space.

C. Content Summation

The chapters were organized into themes that reflected the binary opposition structure. Chapter Four dealt with the relationship between public and private spaces. This discussion included an interpretive analysis of the interview data focusing on individual spaces and social spaces, specifically community places. Summarising the content of this chapter is difficult, but in many cases the idea of home, as both an imaginary and physical place, is an important component of sense of place. The community also plays an important role in the way that social relationships effect sense of place. Sense of place is both personal and shared; it is both private and public. However, these are not two separate entities. They are often blurred, as people are continually moving between people and places, both alone and with other people. This chapter illuminated some of the issues with public and private spaces.

Chapter five focused on the opposition of urban and rural space. This discussion included issues of danger and safety in places, inclusive and exclusive places, and places characterized by sameness and difference. Sherwood Park is considered a "suburb", and this label necessarily influences the way that people negotiate space in their communities. A discussion was presented of some of the stereotypes associated with living in the city, small town, and suburb. This chapter showed how sense of place can be constructed based on the spatial organisation of homes and communities.

Chapter six examined short- and long-term residency in place, looking specifically at rootedness and newness, nostalgia, modernity, and adult and child relationships with place. It is commonly thought that sense of place is based on length of residency in a place. In many cases, the data reflects this, however, there are exceptions to this rule that are difficult to theorize as of yet, for instance the experience of youth culture in place. This chapter demonstrated the complexity of length of residency and how it impacts sense of place.

Chapter seven addressed local and non-local leisure and how these effect sense of place. Leisure and travel represent two important ways in which place influences the imagination and lived experience. This chapter was particularly interesting because it emphasised the important role that leisure experiences have on place experiences. Leisure, whether in the home place or away, has a considerable impact on the lived experience. In fact, the very process of moving through space impacts sense of place. Central to this chapter were discussions around individual leisure experiences in private and public places and the construction of places based on notions of authenticity and commodification.

D. Reflections on the Study

It was originally thought that when people talked about special places in Strathcona County that they would automatically talk about important natural areas. For the most part, regardless of rural or urban residency in Strathcona County, respondents discussed primarily urban issues associated with Sherwood Park. Again, there could be a number of reasons for this. The main one being the increasingly urbanised and suburbanized society we live in. Regardless, there were many inconsistencies with the way in which respondents discussed sense of place in Strathcona County and the ways that I thought they would talk about it.

Apparent inconsistencies in my initial approach and the resultant findings could be a function of the study methodology. Again, there could be a variety of reasons for this. First of all, I asked general questions about sense of place first. This led to a broad discussion of many different elements, such as, family, community, church, and even chairs. The conversation did not address natural areas until the end of the interview. It could be that people were "talked out" and did not want to engage with the study any further. In most cases, when asked about natural areas specifically, people did not associate those areas with a sense of place. People discussed special places, but natural areas were not the places that people associated with a sense of place.

The residents of Strathcona County are people with a certain amount of privilege in our society. The area is not unlike many communities across Alberta or even Canada. The spatial organisation of the suburb has almost become common place in the minds of many Albertans. The people that I interviewed are homeowners, they are employed, they are white, and they have strong support networks or family structures in place that serve to stabilize and affirm their position in place. The people that I interviewed have the freedom to choose what leisure activities they participate in, where they travel on their next vacation, and where they choose to establish roots and buy a home. These people can choose the type of neighbours they what "kind" of community they live in. As a result, the spatial organisation of the communities in Strathcona County are exclusionary to a considerable degree. The home and community are seen as investments, not only monetarily, but also as investments in the social structure of the family.

E. Prospects for the Future

This thesis has attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The theory represents the "mental space" that philosophers theorize about. The practice represents the "physical and social space" that people negotiate and practitioners plan and manage. In both of these separate spheres of thinking about and interacting with space, much work has been done to more fully understand place and space. However, more interdisciplinary work can be done to understand each realm more fully. In effect, this thesis has attempted to bridge two different modes of thinking about the same topic.

The concept of sense of place is rich and complex as the literature reflects. Sense of place is a phenomena with great potential for bridging the gap between the science of ecosystems and their management (Mitchell et al. 1993; Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Schroeder, 1996a, 1996b). Recognising the less tangible meanings of environmental resources can help resource managers understand connections between people and the specific places they manage (Williams & Carr, 1993). The integration of landscape and place meanings and values into land use management plans should be pursued to inform and guide comprehensive decision-making processes, as well as, provide opportunities for meaningful public involvement in the planning process of land management.

The challenge lies in determining appropriate approaches and frameworks that can aid resource planners and managers to gain access to this information. Intangible meanings can be captured only through constant dialogue among stakeholders and continuous public exercises in mapping symbolic landscapes (Williams & Patterson, 1996). This involves a shift in thinking, delving into new discussions of human involvement in natural areas. It also requires alternative methodological approaches for soliciting people's ideas about sense of place and place experiences. Arguably, places are so meaning filled that far more research into the nature of sense of place is needed before the data can effectively be integrated into the land planning and management field. It would be dangerous to see this term as an all-encompassing way of integrating social and cultural meanings and values into the land planning and management field.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I thought all I would have to do was determine how people felt about places. It would be a straightforward process to integrate this information into a planning framework and facilitate a public involvement process that would enable planners and managers to determine these meanings and values people have for places. However, even though I maintained a very open perspective throughout the process, I feel I grossly generalized what respondents would say. There are many things that influence the way that we view space in our lives. There are many ways that we use space to our benefit. In some cases people are very desensitized to their surroundings and in other instances, people seem to be highly sensitive in that places anchor important times and memories for them. Nevertheless, places are contested spaces. Space is inherently social and political, a factor that is not taken up fully by the planning and management field. When people move through space, they bring all of themselves, their past experience, race, gender, and relationships. There are a host of factors that influence our occupation of space and movement through space. After doing this study, I have come to think of places as social stereotypes imprinted on the landscape. It is the borders around places and that people the occupy space that delineate spatial interaction.

Notions of place are even more fluid than the current sense of place literature suggests and, therefore, the concept is challenging to conceptualise. We acknowledge where we come from and mediate those differences in a world that is increasingly fast paced and difficult to comprehend. Representations of place, that produce specific locations or positions, need to be challenged. Further understanding is needed to properly examine representations of place. Moreover, additional research is required to uncover the meaning of location and systems of localization. A pedagogy of place addresses the specificity's of the experiences, problems, languages, histories, that we rely on to construct a narrative of collective identity and possible transformation (Giroux, 1994). Furthermore, as Bhabha (1991, p. 22, as cited in Robins, 1991) says "the responsibility of cultural transmission requires taking seriously the deep, the profound, and the perturbed and perturbing questions of our relationships to others - other cultures, other states, other histories, other experiences, traditions, peoples, and destinies."

F. Personal Journey Revisited

Towards the end of my interviews, I began to feel displaced in Sherwood Park and Strathcona County, not that I necessarily had a strong sense of place there to begin with, but I do have meaningful relationships there. My partner was born and raised there. We have family residing in Sherwood Park, and therefore, we tend to spend considerable amounts of time in the area. I realised that I did not want to have a sense of place in a place like Sherwood Park and I that I would actively resist the forces of meaningful place relationships there. It frightens me on many to levels to think that Strathcona County is potentially an exclusionary place in some ways. It is also a place with a very homogeneous and predictable landscape. There is an absence of public space except under very controlled circumstances. There is a need to "know" your neighbours and by this I mean know what kind of people they are. There is a protectiveness of people and things. And there is also a belief based on the myth that nothing bad happens in places like Sherwood Park. There are these invisible places in the landscape that follow our prescribed lives, which are predictable, efficient, and convenient.

Most apparent to me however, was that I grew in one of these places. And I wonder how the community that I grew up in has produced my sense of place and how I have inscribed myself on that landscape. In fact, I would say that I live in a watered down version of that kind of community now. It is not so isolated or homogenous, but it is in fact one of the very first suburban communities ever created in Edmonton. With the continual spreading of Edmonton, it seems almost inner city. But the history of this place is not inner city, it is post WWII suburbia. Interestingly enough, when we moved here, I thought it was so quiet and unassuming and simple compared to the diversity and noise and complexity of the more urban area of Whyte Avenue where we previously lived. However, we soon realised that we are not invisible to the everyday occurrences of urban life. As circumstances happen, we had a drug related shooting occur in our front lawn. Of course, issues of neighbourhood come up. People asked what kind of neighbourhood do you live in? The incident happened to be "Asian gang" related. People asked questions like "I didn't know you were living in a highly Asian populated area". Comments like these have caused me to reflect on my sense of place and the ways in which space produces and reproduces social and political places, in both positive and negative ways.

The sense of place concept can integrate landscape and place meanings and values into management plans to inform and guide comprehensive decision-making processes and to provide opportunities for meaningful public involvement in the planning process. "Sense of place as a concept offers managers a way to anticipate, identify, and respond to the bonds people form with places" (Williams & Stuart, 1998, p. 18). The most remarkable aspect of this process was the willingness of people to be so open about their intimate places. When discussing a life in a place, you are also discussing a personal life, a life with a history, one that includes important people and things. The conversations with the research participants were intensely personal and reflected important and meaningful lived experiences, not just in geographical places, but in their particular lives. As such, the thesis reflects conversations about life. That life occurs in place cannot be underestimated. Sense of place becomes an important, if not crucial, marker to remembering, imagining, and discussing the lived experience.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Sense of Place:
An interpretive Study of Strathcona County, Alberta
Investigator: Chelsea E. MacLeod (780) 444-7586

The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of sense of place to short and long-term residents of Strathcona. You have been identified as someone who might be willing to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Each person will be interviewed up to two times. During these interviews you will be asked to describe what sense of place means to you, a place that is meaningful, and the reasons why. These interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed. In order to protect anonymity, the tapes and their associated transcripts will be assigned a pseudonym, coded, and locked in a filing cabinet to which only the investigator has access. After the second interview the information gained from your participation will be made available to you so that you may comment on the accuracy of the investigators interpretation of you "data."

The final research project, including anonymous quotations will be available to all participants, and will be presented as part of a Master's thesis. The research findings may be published in a journal but the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects will be ensured. Although their may be more direct benefits to participants in this study, the research findings may assist land use planning and management in gaining a deeper understanding of sense of place and people-place relationships.

The University of Alberta creates and collects information for the purposes of research and other activities directly related to its educational and research programs. All participants in research projects are advised that the information they provide, and any other information gathered for research projects, will be protected and used in compliance with Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Sense of Place: An interpretive study Strathcona County, Alberta
Informed Consent Form

This is to certify that I, ______________________________(print name) hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above named project.

I understand that there should be no health risks to me resulting from my participation in this research. The potential benefits of this research to me include increased self-knowledge. However, I recognise that there are potential risks involved when discussing personal issues (e.g. feelings of embarrassment). This may make some participants uncomfortable.

I hereby give permission to be interviewed, and for these interviews to be recorded on audio tape. I understand that following completion of the research project, transcripts and field notes will be destroyed. I understand that the information may be published, but my name will be kept anonymous and confidential.

I understand that I am free to refuse to answer questions during interviews. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation in this project at any time without penalty and that data will be removed from the study upon my request. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I wish, and that they have been answered to my satisfaction. I acknowledge receipt of this consent form.

Signed,

____________________	____________________	____________________
Participant	Witness	Researcher

____

Date

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Type of Residency	Gender	Age
Long-term Urban	Male	27
Long-term Urban	Male	29
Long-term Urban	Male	26
Short-term Urban	Male	55
Short-term Urban	Female	54
Short-term Urban	Female	26
Long-term Rural	Female	40
Long-term Rural	Male	60
Long-term Rural	Female	58
Short-term Rural	Male	32
Short-term Rural	Female	39
Short-term Rural	Male	45

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This interview schedule represents an overview of the type and style of questions that may be asked during in-depth interviews with research participants.

General Questions:

Could you please give me a brief description of what the term sense of place means to you?

What do you associate with the word sense of place?

Describe a place that is meaningful to you. For example what does the place look like, smell like, feel like. Describe other prominent features.

What is it about the place that is meaningful to you?

How did you come to an understanding about the meaningfulness of this place?

How does it make you feel?

What are the thoughts, feelings, and memories etc that come to mind when you think about this place?
For example: people, family, important vacation destination, place where you perform your favourite activity, etc.

Is there an essence or spirit in the place that you are thinking about?

Specific Questions:

Describe a place that is meaningful to you in Strathcona County.

Is there anything in particular about the place that captivates you?

Could you describe the place in detail?

Could you describe in detail the feelings you experienced at the time?
For example weather, climate, sounds smells, etc.

Are there important places in Strathcona County? Why are they important?

Why do you choose to live in Strathcona County?

Why did you move to Strathcona County?

Are natural areas important to choosing a place of residence? What natural areas in Strathcona County are important to you?

What are some connections that you have to places in Strathcona County?
For example: activities, social relations, physical geography, topography, history, culture, livelihood etc.

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